

GURU GOBIND SINGH

HISTORICAL
AND IDEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE



MADANJIT KAUR

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Guru Gobind Singh

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GURU GOBIND SINGH
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by

Madanjit Kaur

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PREFACE

This book is not only an abstract of the history and thought of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, in itself as a pure academic exercise. It also aims to understand and bring into focus the empirical and applied aspects of the great Guru's teachings in the development of Sikhism and growth of new traits in the process of socio-cultural revival and rise of freedom consciousness in the political history of India.

This volume does not claim any mastery on the subject under study. It simply attempts to exemplify only those aspects of the life, thought and legacy of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, which have not been studied thoroughly by the researchers. The thrust of this book is to grasp the dynamic vision of the Tenth Master on the destiny of the Indian Nation in context to contemporary socio-political milieu and to bring forth to the attention of the multi-cultural Indian communities, the pragmatic significance of Guru Gobind Singh's teachings in the present context.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh's life is a telling reaffirmation of his divine mission and universal and humanitarian Sikh cultural heritage. Because of the wide range of his dynamic vision and philosophy of life, the Guru became an uncompromising advocate of humanitarian principles by proclaiming *manas ki jat sabhe eko pahchanboo* (all mankind are one). He was the progenitor of the democratic revolution in India. The life and teachings of Guru Gobind Singh are a matter of international significance. The teachings of the Guru in the realm of intellectual and moral approach to the problem of human existence may be considered as the most significant contribution of his times. Guru Gobind Singh had not only projected the glorious cultural heritage of our multi-cultural country but had also introduced new innovations pertaining

to social transformation and universal value pattern for the protection of human freedom and democratic rights and welfare of the global society.

The lesson this academic exercise emphasizes stress on is on the sound moral reorientation of the Indian Society for survival and future prospects of the multi-cultural Indian Nation in view of current cultural crisis created by erosion of ethical values; indifference to human sufferings, communal politics, tension, suspicion and distrust between majority and minority communities. The challenge of international terrorism; open war hysteria between big powers of the West and ethnic communities of the East caused by clash of market interests and rise of fundamentalism reminds us the dire need of international understanding and unity of mankind as preached by Guru Gobind Singh.

The publication of the book *Guru Gonind Singh : Historical and Ideological perspective* marks our tribute to the great Guru on the forthcoming occasion of the celebration of the 300th *Jyoti Jyot Samavana divas* (departure from the mortal world) of Guru Gobind Singh (October 30, 1708 A.D.) and the 300th *Guru Gurta Gaddi Shatabdi* Samaroh (300th anniversary of the succession of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* as the 'Guru' of the Sikhs proclaimed by Guru Gobind Singh before his demise at Nanded on October 27, 1708 A.D.)

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. D.P. Singh of Nangal for reading the manuscript of this book.

I acknowledge with deep gratitude the support of my family members who have undertaken the tedious job of looking after my ailing health during the last four years to enable me to complete this task.

I am highly indebted to all those scholars whose works I have consulted in preparing this monograph. My thanks are due to Dr. Harpal Singh for extending his full support in collecting information and research material from Himachal Pradesh for this volume. I am grateful to S. Satpal Danish (Danish Studio, Amritsar), Late S. Amolak Singh Artist (Honorary Curator, Central Sikh Museum Golden Temple, Amritsar) and

S. Kulwant Singh Chaudhari, Manager, Gurudwara Sri Harimandir Sahib, Paonta Sahib, H.P. for providing me valuable illustrations to make this work more interesting and significant.

I express my deep gratitude to Mr. Harish Jain of Unistar Books Pvt. Ltd., Chandigarh, for tracing me after my retirement from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar to get hold of my unpublished works, otherwise, this book would not have come out in print.

Finally, I apologise to the readers that on account of my serious illness, I could not prepare the manuscript of this book upto the mark. I still hope this book would be welcomed by the readers not only as token of our homage and gratitude to Guru Gobind Singh, but a reminiscence of the significant historical and moral lessons it imbibes. I have no doubt that readers, researchers, students, devotees and serious scholars of Sikhism, comparative theology, Philosophy and History will also find this work useful and commendable.

In the end, I must add, that for all the drawbacks and opinions expressed in this book, I alone am to be held responsible.

Date: August 8, 2007

Place: Chandigarh

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INTRODUCTION

Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708), the Tenth Guru of the Sikhs, was a divine preceptor and crusader for noble cause of human welfare. He was a combination of social and spiritual unity inspired by the highest ideals both patriotic and humanitarian. The Guru was pre-eminently a man of action and has rightly been considered as a rare phenomenon in history. Guru Gobind Singh's life was one of intense struggle against unimaginable odds and it was a legend full of poignant tragedies and untold sufferings and glorious triumphs. His mission was ordained by the 'Divine Will' and he sacrificed everything for the sake of realisation of spirituality and service of humanity. Guru Gobind Singh was a great religious leader, a poet and a mystic, a true scholar and philosopher and at the same time a fearless warrior and military commander who always fought against tyranny and oppression in order to establish just and benign state. His struggle was for spirituality and not for power or territorial possession. His main consideration was to protect the basic rights of all humans and arm them with moral and spiritual courage. He completely identified himself to social commitment and humanitarian unity. If we keep in mind his multifaceted personality, his laudable objectives, his pragmatic thinking, his wide and varied experiences, the variety and extent of his actions in life, the vast canvas of his achievements, his great sacrifices and his victories, then it is not difficult for us to assess his role in history as far greater and glorious than any of the makers of the modern history have made out. The overall image of the Great Guru is more dynamic than any of the utopian character of the 'Superman' as envisaged by modern philosophers like F.H., Bradley, Fredrick Nietzsche and Aldous Huxley. In fact Guru Gobind Singh was a prophet and the father of his age. He ushered in a new philosophy of life and lived those ideals in the historical

time. He transcended the fear of death and his actions were guided by the 'Divine Will'. With his spiritual dynamism, Guru Gobind Singh attempted to reconcile the transcendent with the immanent through his creation of the Khalsa. He had realised the Truth of life and had practised it. His life and works conform to his conviction in the specific ideology, that history is a recognition of human freedom which attunes to the 'Divine Will' and it is not be to predetermined by the nexus of historical laws and myths. The Guru certainly led a crowded and a fuller life and how much did he achieve during the 42 eventual years of his life span, we cannot describe but the glory and grandeur are there.

Undoubtedly, Guru Gobind Singh succeeded in transforming supine and frustrated people, who had resigned themselves to a defeatist mentality and had accepted the deplorable role of fatalists, who dared not to exert themselves to become warriors against tyranny and oppression. The Sikh masses in despair, were not conscious of the patriotic spirit and great destiny which their faith held before them. It was Guru Gobind Singh who initiated a powerful resurgence in Sikh community. His mission like lightning from the heaven, infused new life and a spirit of self-confidence into almost dead people and encouraged them to stand up and fight against the exploitation of an autocratic state. To resist tyranny was a moral duty for the Guru. His first concern was to make the people strong in mind and will, through knowledge of truth, freedom, self-respect, and dignity. Social upliftment and spiritual compensation, was Guru Gobind Singh's 'Divine Mission', and he succeeded in his task and worked a miracle.

Guru Gobind Singh was called upon to meet the challenge of a most difficult situation in human existence in the Indian scenario. The Guru stood up with courage unsurpassed in human history for the protection of freedom of worship, social and spiritual justice and fought relentlessly against the oppression of the mighty Mughals. Guru Gobind Singh gallantly fought a number of battles against the Rajput Hill Rajas and the Mughal State and sacrificed his all, for the cause of righteousness. The Guru had deeply inspired the people and provided them with a high degree of motivation and a revolutionary ideology. Guru Gobind Singh was a

man of moral ideals and was equally fearless in defending them. His personal example inspired many of his devotees to consider death for a worthy cause as the noblest goal of their life. The Guru did not aspire to personal power or glory, but instead strived for a just society, human dignity and humanitarian unity, the Guru had no territorial ambitions.¹ His aim was for the social and moral uplift of all and to free the country from the oppressive rule. His stand was based on moral ethics and open challenge. He was the pioneer Indian leader to introduce republican set up and democratic institutions. His creation of the Khalsa was an act of great daring foresight to carry a never ending war against evil. He called his mission as *Dharam Yudh* - fight for victory of morality and Truth over evil and injustice.² Its objective was to protect the righteous, oppressed and downtrodden people; and to destroy the evil-doers. The Guru considered *Dharam Yudh* his moral duty both as a 'Divine Call' and a 'Divine Compensation'.

Guru Gobind Singh can indeed be looked upon as a special messenger of God on this earth for the dispensation of Divine Justice through his revolutionary mission which was enshrined in the Divine Will. It was in the pursuance of this 'Divine Mission' that God sent Guru Gobind Singh to this world. In the Guru's own words : "You are my chosen and cherished son, whom I have installed for strengthening faith and religion. Go down to earth and propagate righteousness, And refrain the World from senseless acts."³ His message was not only for his own people but for the whole mankind. His commandment hails his vision of the cosmic man: Recognise all Humanity as one in spirit.⁴ The universal message of the Guru has great potentiality for the futuristic concerns of Sikhism. With meagre resources at his disposal and at a very young age, Guru Gobind Singh created history with record of sufferings for faith and freedom. The martyrdom of his father, mother, four sons and hundreds of his followers for lofty ideals of freedom and justice is an unparallel example of sacrifice in the history of mankind. 'Guru Gobind Singh's personality is a wonderfully harmonious combination of so many good and manly qualities, as have seldom been found blended together in one person'.⁵ A charismatic leader with a fascinating personality and

magnetic fortitude, Guru Gobind Singh rallied around him thousands of followers totally dedicated to him and ready to sacrifice their lives in espousing the cause of Truth and Justice. He created a unique institution to bring spiritual awakening, social reforms, equality and political freedom. Guru Gobind Singh's greatest achievement is the Creation of the Khalsa by the famous baptismal ceremony on the Baisakhi Day of 1699 by which the Guru raised the Khalsa and bestowed on them his blessings, gift of valour and a distinct identity. The Khalsa was bound to a strict code of conduct (*Rehat Maryada*). It was made clear to the Khalsa that the affinity between the Khalsa and the Guru shall remain conditioned to the adherence of the Khalsa to the code of conduct prescribed by the Guru. Guru Gobind Singh also ordained the Khalsa to uphold right in every place and destroy evil in every form; should not submit to oppression and tyranny and fight for the cause of righteousness and the welfare of humanity. Since the Khalsa upheld the social values, it constituted a revolutionary force. The Khalsa was obliged to sacrifice its all at the call of the *Dharma* (righteousness). The service of humanity was its religion. In fact, Khalsa was meant to be an instrument of God for the fulfillment of humanity. The establishment of the Khalsa was the realisation of Guru Gobind Singh's divinely inspired vision and altruistic attitude for the upliftment of the suffering humanity. It was a grand creative deed of history which brought a revolutionary change in the minds of the people and aroused their dormant energies to positive purposes. By the activities of the Khalsa, people were made conscious of their servitude and taught to stand up on their feet courageously to redeem their predicament. The Khalsa build up strong ethos of chivalry and gallantry having left permanent imprints on the psyche of the people of the Punjab and the history of India. Guru Gobind Singh's life unfolds like a grim and terrible romance of an incessant fight against heavy odds. But this romance is enriched by the serene and sublime impact of his personality, aura of his saintliness, and the glory of his faith in God and his solicitude for the downtrodden, as well as by the devotion of his family and the loyalty of his dedicated followers. The significance of the contributions of Guru Gobind Singh and the role he played in the history of India and world civilisation can not be overlooked

and are of highest grading. His contributions are enormous. He had not only introduced social transformation in India but also gave a new set of universal values and a pragmatic humanitarian vision for the formation of a global society. The debt India owes to the Great Guru is hard to be estimated.

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GURU GOBIND SINGH AND HIS MISSION

Guru Gobind Singh (original name Gobind Rai) was born at Patna¹ on Poh Sudi 7, 1723 Bikrami corresponding to 22 December 1666.² He had realised from his childhood that he was living in troublesome times, where civilized life on a spiritual plane was impossible due to ideological bigotry practised by a tyrant state. It is said that during his childhood he used to play the commander, while his playmates acted as soldiers. His favourite games were sham fights, military exercise and manoeuvres. The child Guru had proved that his dispensation was that of a brave combat and he evinced all the propensities of a martial character.³ Pandit Shiv Dutt was appointed his tutor.⁴ It is said that the local Raja Fateh Chand Maini was a devout Sikh of Guru Tegh Bahadur. His Rani was issuesless. She was fond of the child Gobind Rai and treated him as her own son.⁵ Gobind Rai's upbringing is said to have been reared up under the supervision of his maternal uncle, Kirpal. When he was six years old (1673) Gobind Rai was sent for by his father Guru Tegh Bahadur to Sri Anandpur Sahib.⁶ Soon after he reached Anandpur, his father appointed Bajar Singh Rajput and other trainers to give him instruction in riding, archery hunting and other martial arts. Chaupa Singh was appointed as his attendant. Gobind Rai was a gifted child and had high aptitude for knowledge of classical languages, poetics and other subjects of secular education. Kirpa Ram Brahmin and Qazi Pir Mohammed of Saloh were appointed to

teach him Hindi and Persian script and Bhai Chaupa Singh, Bhai Gurbaksh Singh and Sahib Chand were given the charge of teaching him Gurmukhi and *Gurbani* respectively. Proper arrangement for the teaching of Sanskrit and ancient Indian literature was also made under the supervision of Pandit Har Jas Rai. Ram Ji Vashishat and Krishan Ji Sandipan were instructors of Gobind Rai. Special and suitable arrangements were made for training him in horsemanship and in the use of arms games and horse riding Training in martial arts was given to him by his sports instructor Phulha.⁷ These were serious occupations of the young Gobind. Besides schooling and hunting, writing of poetry became his passion. There Guru Teg Bahadur took every care to prepare Gobind Rai to meet the future responsibilities of the Sikh community.

Gobind Rai was a precocious child. At an early age he began to show signs of being endowed with noble ideals and a strong personality of a high spirit and noble aim. When less than 9 years old he counselled to his illustrious father, Guru Tegh Bahadur to sacrifice his head ('sis') for the sake of protection of the freedom of worship, truth and righteousness.⁸ The occasion was the arrival of a deputation of Brahmins from Kashmir seeking support of Guru Tegh Bahadur for the protection of their faith against the policy of forcible conversion initiated by the fanatic Muslim ruler Aurangzeb against the Hindus. The Guru made the supreme sacrifice for the protection of freedom of conscience and *Dharma*.⁹ Gobind Rai was only nine years old when his father was executed at Delhi in 1675 by the order of Emperor Aurangzeb. This shocking incident steeled his spirit and inspired him to resist the forces of evil and tyranny.¹⁰ His hour had arrived, he felt that he would have to be the saviour of all the Sikhs who had assembled under his banner as well as of all the Sikh *sangats* spread all over India. Like his grandfather, Guru Hargobind, he issued edicts, *hukamnama* (letters), that presents of arms, armaments and horses would please him.¹¹ The aim was to arouse the interest of the Sikhs in martial training and equip them to fight the oppression in all its forms-societal, political religious and material.

Gobind Rai grew into a very handsome and well built youth and was the object of adoration and admiration of all who came into

his contact. As he grew into manhood he decided to resist the tyranny of the reigning authority. The execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur was very staggering for the young Gobind. He soon realised that the adversary meant to destroy the very essence of the secular, humanitarian and universal doctrines of the Sikh faith and it was his duty to resist the enemy with all the means at his disposal, for it was the battle of survival not only of the life but of idealism.¹² He openly and publically practised holding daily a regular *darbar* (court) at Anandpur Sahib. 'Asa di Var' was sung in the morning, after day break he imparted religious instructions to the congregation. 'Rehras' was recited and *diwans* were held in the evening. Alongwith spiritual development of the community the Guru took special care of the physical fitness of his Sikhs and let it be known that he would welcome able bodied men to join his crusade. His mission of life became clear to him. Guru Gobind Singh began to prepare himself for the future responsibility of the Sikh Panth and to take up the cause of the oppressed against the tyranny of the autocratic State which was imposing forced conversion and all sorts of atrocities on the people. The sixth chapter of the *Dasam Granth* describes in Guru Gobind Singh's own words, the mission of his life in this world and helps us to understand and interpret certain events in his life. The seventh chapter of *Dasam Granth* includes autobiographical monologue of the Guru, his birth at Patna and the death of his father, his visit to Paonta and hunting excursions on the banks of river Jamuna, the battles of Bangani, Nadaun and Guler, and the march of Prince Muzzam (Emperor Bahadur Shah) on the Punjab.

In his autobiography (*Apni Katha*) which forms a part of the 'Bachitra Natak' (The wondrous Drama), incorporated in *Dasam Granth*, the idea of *Dharam Yudh* (the battle for the sake of righteousness) is clearly evident in his compositions. Guru Gobind Singh announced:

I came into the world charged with the duty,
to uphold the right in every place, to destroy sin and
evil,
O Ye holymen, know it well in your hearts that the only
reason,

I took birth was to see that righteousness may flourish,
that good may live and tyrants to be torn out by their
very roots.¹³

This revolutionary Mission was enshrined in the Divine Will.
Describing the attributes of God, Guru Gobind Singh emphatically
points to the implied meaning of the Ordain of God:

Thou bestowest happiness on good.
Thou terrifiest the evil.¹⁴

Thou scatterest sinners -
I seek thy protection.¹⁵

Saveth saints, and destroyeth enemies.
God is compassionate to the poor, He is the cherisher
of the lowly.¹⁶

Thus cherishing the poor and destroying the tyrant are
according to Guru Gobind Singh, God's own mission. It was in the
pursuance of His mission that God sent Guru Gobind Singh to this
world. In Guru's own words the Divine Commandment of his
mission was :

I have cherished Thee as my son
and created Thee to extend my religion.
Go and spread my religion there,
And restrain the world from senseless acts.

*(Dasam Granth -p.57)*¹⁷

Guru Gobind Singh started defensive preparation for his
mission He had already let it be known that he would welcome
offerings in arms and horses. In the background of the Sikh
traditions he made it sure that his crusade was not to be wrongly
interpreted as that of the Sikhs against Muslim. Within a few years
of his succession to guruship, Guru Gobind Singh had enlisted a
large number of men both Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims for his army.
The Guru's intention always stood on the defensive, he never took
the offensive. But there was radical change in the political situation.
The Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb confronted his non-Muslim
subjects with a policy of forceful conversion as a political

challenge. The resistance to state oppression meant direct confrontation. The Guru was already expecting such a situation. The trouble enhanced when the Rajput Rajas of Shivalik Hills grew hostile to him. These hill rajas proved the greatest obstacle to the Guru. Out of ignorance, they became jealous of the Guru's phenomenal success and owing to petty selfishness they perpetually fought against him and would not let him rest in peace and do his constructive work in rehabilitating the suppressed and downtrodden Hindu people of the hill area. These *rajas* were scarred of losing their feudal prerogatives on account of social reforms and intellectual awakening being initiated by Guru Gobind Singh. These *rajas* were humbled down on many occasions by superior wisdom and fighting strength of Guru Gobind Singh. These Hindu *rajas* also proved to be traitors of their own people as they invoked the aid of the fanatic Mughals to crush the power of the Guru who had heralded a reformatory movement for the protection of the people against the Mughal State. These hill *rajas* had no ethics of diplomatic relationships. They had promised to support the Guru earlier against the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb; their common enemy but soon they turned against the Guru. Thus creating a serious problem of defence and security for the Guru and his organisation. Guru Gobind Singh retired for some years to the State of Nahan, where on the land offered by its ruler, Raja Medni Prakash he founded a fort called Paonta. There the Guru was kept busy in inspiring his Sikhs with courage and heroism to get ready for the coming struggle. Military training and martial feats were performed daily at his *Darbar*. Poets and *dhadis* used to sing heroic ballads to arouse the spirit of patriotism and chivalry among his followers. The Guru had a war drum installed, it was called '*Ranjit Nagara*' (the drum of victory). It was beaten up daily in the morning and evening after the routine prayers and its beating was regarded as symbol of sovereignty.

All these measures infused the Sikhs with self-confidence and gave them an exalted sense of their own worth. Observing Guru's growing power, prosperity, progress and military strength as well as his increasing popularity in their areas, the hill *rajas* got scared. Raja Bhim Chand of Bilaspur in whose territory, Anandpur Sahib

was located successfully pressed neighbouring hill chiefs to expel the Guru from their region. Guru Gobind Singh met the armies of the hill chiefs at Bhangani (near Paonta). The battle of Bhangani was fought in 1686. Although, the Pathan mercenaries and a large number of Udasis deserted Guru's camp but their leaders - Budhu Shah and his sons, and Mahant Kirpal Chand Udasi fought with bravery, devotion, success and sacrifices. This was the first battle fought by Guru Gobind Singh against the confederacy of the hill chiefs. Guru Gobind Singh had given a vivid account of the battle of Bhangani in his composition 'Bachitar Natak'. In the *Dasam Granth* this battle is referred to as the Hussaini Yudh after the name of the Mughal commander Hussain Khan who was heading the Mughal troops.

The victory at Bhangani encouraged Guru Gobind Singh to leave the mountains and to return to his ancestral home in Anandpur Sahib. Guru Gobind Singh's second battle was fought at Nadaun in 1687 in collaboration with some of the hill chiefs against the Mughals, who had invaded their territory for forceful collection of revenue. In this battle the Guru's army won rebounding victory over the Mughals despite their superiority in numbers and arms. However, soon after the victory, the hill chiefs decided to come to terms with the Mughals, but Guru Gobind Singh did not like the idea of negotiating with the enemy who had no morals and integrity. He retired to Anandpur Sahib where he lived peacefully for a number of years. During this period Guru Gobind Singh devoted all his energies to strengthen his community. He fortified his headquarters at Anandpur Sahib and also built a chain of fortresses of Anandgarh, Kesgarh and Fatehgarh to keep the hill states in check. Gradually, the Guru firmly consolidated his hold in the area and became more powerful than the hill *rajas*.

The Guru got respite of more than a decade. Secured in his territory the Guru started the task of consolidation of the Sikh organisation with greater vigor and care. Guru Gobind Singh's stay at Anandpur Sahib was filled with intellectual and literary activities. He had already been taught Hindi, Punjabi, Sanskrit and Persian languages in childhood. The classical education and the life of seclusion in the mountain retreat at Paonta earlier had encouraged the growth of talent of the poet in Guru Gobind Singh.

He now began to compose verses in four languages he had learnt. The Guru was a prolific writer and a poet of rare sensibility. He wrote in many languages. Although substantial portion of his literary work was lost in river Sarsa at the time of his retreat from Anandpur to Chamkaur. What survived is enough to establish him as a high rank litterateur. It has been estimated that some of his works deserve the highest place in the realm of Braj Bhasha of the narrative poetics and epic style.

According to one opinion all the works incorporated in *Dasam Granth* are attributed to Guru Gobind Singh. However, it is generally accepted that eleven works of poetry which emanated from Guru Gobind Singh are compiled in *Dasam Granth* or *Dasam Patshah Ka Granth* which is a collection of various compilations produced by the Guru and by his court poets. In order to avoid the cult of personality, the Guru took care not to incorporate his works in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, the holy book of the Sikhs.

In the writings of Guru Gobind Singh we have a full insight into the mind of the Guru—as a poet, as a mystic as well as a scholar of philosophy who had studied thoroughly the classics of Puranic Literature. A deep probe into the central theme of these writings explore the unity of monotheism which transcends the plurality. The moral of the story is given in each case in a very subtle manner either at the end or nearer the conclusion of the episode. The coded message should be decoded in its syntax in order to get the real meaning and purpose of the author which he wishes to convey to the reader through the text. But more striking is the fact, how thoroughly the Guru had realised what a vital role literature could be made to play in rousing the dormant energies of vanquished and a degenerated people who had lost heart and hope in the betterment of their condition because of religious and political oppression. Selected heroic stories and episodes from Hindu mythology in Sanskrit also were translated and recomposed in easier diction for the understanding of the masses. Besides, Guru Gobind Singh composed his own poetry which is equally great and strong. Through his composition the Guru enunciated a doctrine of armed struggle for the protection of truth and justice. His poetry proved a turning point in the realm of Hindi literature.

His Ode in blank verse in Punjabi, *Chandi di Vaar*, is a unique example of personification of a myth into deity of power, symbolic of the victory of virtue over vice's and glory of righteousness in this mundane world. In Hindi (Braj) he developed a style and form, which for its martial format, richness of imagination and variety of similes and metaphors from old Puranic literary tradition has remained unsurpassed since his times.

Guru Gobind Singh has greatly enriched the literary heritage of India. His poetic vision depicts the glorious epitome of medieval Indian literary traditions. His creative genius formulated in emotions motivates for higher action and breaks out against superstition and hypocrisy with humour and irony as we find in his *Chaubis Avtar*. His emotions, often projected with intellectual exercise by the lessons of wrongs done by the past, is raised to the highest pitch of ecstasy when he communes with God in *Akal Ustat* and points to the eternal unity of human existence with the Cosmos.

The idea of Divine Intervention in Human history, is deeply rooted in his writings. In his '*Bachitra Natak*' he declared that God had commissioned him 'to uphold righteousness and to destroy all evil-doers root and branch'. Guru Gobind Singh fully enhanced the importance of patriotic genre as motivating force. He placed literary activity in the forefront of his programme of national reconstruction. He translated classical and ancient stories of Indian heroes as found in the *Puranas*, the *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharata* into vernacular. The Guru extended generous patronage to scholars and men of letters. Under his patronage considerable literature was composed at his court. The keynote of this vast literature, some of which is preserved in the *Dasam Granth* is optimism, freedom from superstitions, rituals, polytheism and a strong faith in the unity of God and unity of mankind. The Guru recognised oneness of all humanity irrespective of racial genetic, linguistic, geographical and cultural plurality. At that time the country was passing through a crisis of political and religious disintegration. The writings of Guru Gobind Singh specifically stress the need to revive the inherent pluralistic society of our cultural heritage. Guru Gobind Singh was fully aware about the crucial issue of integration and harmony in our pluralistic society. For the purpose of national unity he

repeatedly stressed on the need to strengthen the spirit of unity in diversity in our pluralistic society. Besides, his purpose in producing patriotic literature was to infuse a feeling of confidence among his countrymen to help them come out of despair and then like men of action, steel their hearts against oppression and fight for righteousness against injustice and tyranny.

In his poetry, Guru Gobind Singh created a new metaphor of the sword. The sword was the symbol of Shakti, Kalika or Durga and of Akal Himself. God has been described as *Sarbloh* (All-steel). In fact, the selection of this symbol was intended to give a new orientation to the psyche of the people, demoralized by subjugation to foreign rule and streak of passivity in their very nature. The people yoked to slavery of the alien rule needed a new forceful vocabulary and a new principle of faith. This incentive was provided by Guru Gobind Rai by introducing new signs and symbols as medium of communication for spiritual inspiration. In the opening part of the '*Bachitra Natak*' the sword has been divined as God. The Guru invokes the Almighty as:

I bow with love and devotion to the holy Sword.
Assist me so that I may complete my task.

God and sword are mentioned here synonymously. Then follows a ringing and soulfully rendered invocation, to the sword. The diction, a form of Prakrit, is so powerful that it reproduces the clangorous rhythm of clashing swords with such a verve that the mere concentration of the recitation of verses inspire heroic endeavour and chivalrous action. For example in '*Bachitar Natak*' the Guru acclaims:

Thou art the Subduer of kingdoms,
the destroyer of the armies of the wicked
In the battlefield Thou adorest the brave.
Thy arm is infrangible, Thy brightness refulgent
Thy radiance and splendour dazzle like the sun.
Thou bestowest happiness on the good and virtuous,
Thou terrifiest the evil. Thou scatterest sinners.
I seek Thy protection.

Hail! Hail to the Creator of the World
The saviour of creation, my cherisher,
Hail to Thee O Sword.

(*Dasam Granth*, p.39)

In the poetry of Guru Gobind Singh God is predominantly symbolized as a weapon of war to fight injustice. He is depicted as the Punisher of the evil and the Destroyer of tyrants. But the benevolent aspect is also simultaneously and equally forcefully emphasised. God is invoked as the Fountain-head of mercy, the kingman of the poor, and the Bestower of felicity. Thus fusion of the devotional and martial, of the spiritual and the heroic ethos was the most important feature of the literary works of Guru Gobind Singh as well as that of his chrismatic leadership. The Guru made all sorts of arrangements to generate this spirit among his followers. At his *Darbar* (court), every evening, the Sikhs heard ballads extolling the deeds of warriors who had defied tyranny by the power of arms. A martial atmosphere blended with spiritual fervor came to pervade the Guru's *Darbar* at Anandpur Sahib.

The patriotic literature popularised in Braj, a kind of early western Hindi mixed with dialects of Punjabi served as an effective handmaid to his constructive works and at the same time created a demand for literacy, education, moral and ethical value system among his followers. The style of his poetics is grand while the imagery used is acute. His themes are religious and the Guru was basically the poet of the Divine. His famous compositions are *Jaap Sahib*, *Akal Ustat*, *Bachitra Natak*, *Chandi Charitra* (*Var Sri Bhagauti Ji Ki*), *Khalsa Mahima*, *Chaubis Avtar*, *Gian Prabodh*, *Shastarnammala*, *Sabad Hazare*, *Sawayyas*, *Khalsa Mahima*, *Zafarnama* and *Hikayat*. All these are in Braj or Punjabi languages except the last two which are in Persian. Guru Gobind Singh's compositions are considered to be the most remarkable and integrating compositions in the realm of medieval Indian religious poetry and are unique examples of the medieval vision with modern outlook aimed at bringing about a spiritual awaking and social transformation.

For the inspiration and motivation of people to prepare themselves for the heroic deeds when fighting in support of

righteousness, the Guru had engaged 52 talented poets of high calibre at his court at Paonta Sahib. These poets came to the Guru's *darbar* from various parts of India. They were provided lavish patronage. Guru Gobind Singh's preference for the heroic poetry set the pattern for the compositions. These poets reset in Braj Bhasha stories of those ancient Indian warriors who had faced dare-devils. They also dealt with history and the wars between Gods and demons (Virtue and Vice). The works of some of the Guru's court poets have come to us. Among them Saina Pat's *GurSobha* is the primary source of information on the creation of the Khalsa, battle of Guru Gobind Singh and his demise and proclamation of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* as the future Guru of the Sikhs. The Guru rewarded his poets generously for their creative writings. They also translated several books from classic literature. Bhai Nand Lal 'Goya' (previously a Governor at the Mughals posted in Multan and frontier province) was one of the well known poets of his court, he was a great Persian scholar. Bhai Nand Lal had composed many works. His most famous works are *Bandgi Nama (Zindagi Nama)*, *Jyot Vigas* and *Guzalliat*.

Guru Gobind Singh sent five of his scholars to Kashi (Varanasi) to learn Sanskrit and Hindu religious texts so that they could be well equipped to interpret the Puranic mythology and Vedantic Philosophy in a better way. These five disciples established the school of theologians known as the *Nirmalas* (the unsullied). The first five Nirmals were Karam Singh, Ganda Singh, Vir Singh, Saina Singh and Ram Singh. Later on these *Nirmalas* became the foremost interpreters of the Sikh scripture and Sikh Theology. Guru Gobind Singh also engaged ballad singers at his court. The Guru gave military training, organised his followers into an armed unit with martial zeal and discipline. The writers and musicians at his court were involved in the task of creating a cultural background for preparing his followers to get ready for the coming struggle. On the practical side mock battles were fought at Paonta and Anandpur Sahib to give his Sikhs the chance to practise their manoeuvres, battle and strategy of war. His Sikhs flocked for his *darshan* with presents of horses, swords, precious articles and war material for they had realised that the survival of their community

was at stake. On account of these well planned activities, a martial atmosphere blended with spirituality came to pervade in the Guru's *darbar* at Anandpur Sahib. The Guru had built Anandpur as a great centre of the Sikh organisation.

For some years, Guru Gobind Singh carried on his programme of reorganising the infrastructure of the Sikh community undisturbed. Busy in his engagements, the Guru produced literary works and also reared his family in Anandpur Sahib. Four sons - Sahibzada Ajit Singh, Sahibzada Jujhar Singh, Sahibzada Zorawar Singh and Sahibzada Fateh Singh were born to his two wives. Mata Sundari and Mata Jeeto. He spent much time pondering over the causes of weakness and disunity in the Sikh organisation and decided to reorganise the internal set up of the Sikh community.

Before giving practical shape to his ideas, Guru Gobind Singh decided to abolish the institution of the *Masands* (representatives) of the *guru* for preaching the message of Sikhism and collecting offerings from the Sikh *sangats* of their areas. The *masands* had become greedy, corrupt, oppressive and degenerated and immoral. Most of the *masands* were behaving independently and no longer been serving the cause for which they were appointed. They had set up their independent establishments and extorted money from the Sikh *sangat* for their personal use. The *masands* had become a cause of disruption in the unity of community. Guru Gobind Singh was also well aware about the corrupt practices which had crept into the organisation of the Sikhs and had caused internal disruption in the community. The *Masands* had deviated from their original assignment and Sikh ethics. They were indulging in evil practices and corruption and were misleading the Sikhs of their areas. Many *masands* had set themselves up as Gurus in their own districts and had began to nominate their own successors. Instead of propagating Sikhism and forwarding the collection and offerings from the devotees to the Guru's treasury, they were engaged in money-lending and trading on the offerings, which they extorted from the local Sikhs.

Guru Gobind Singh decided to abolish the institution of *masands* and to reorganise the 'Guru-Sikh' relationship on closer

five disciples as *Panj Piyaras* (five beloved ones) and they were to be the nucleus of the *Khalsa* (the pure). The Guru baptised these *Panj Piyaras* in a new manner. The initiation ceremony called *Khande-de-pahul* was administered with *amrit* (sugar in plain water) and churned with a double edged dagger, to the recitation of hymns from *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* including 'Jap Sahib'. The five beloved ones were then made to drink *Amrit* out of one bowl to signify their initiation into the casteless fraternity of the *Khalsa*.

The baptism of the *Khande-de-pahul* was a process of social transformation of the initiates to bring about a new social order. At the *Amrit* ceremony all distinctions of caste and creed were wiped off, and it has been appropriately termed as the Nash doctrine in Sikh theology. The membership of the *Khalsa* was restricted to those who were not only alive to the objectives of the movement but were also willing to make sacrifices for it. At the time of the initiation each entrant to the brotherhood of the *Khalsa* gained five freedoms- freedom from the shackles of earlier *Dharma* (creed), earlier *Karma* (deeds), *Kirt* (previous occupation), *Kul* of having served the family ties related to Brahmanic beliefs, *varan* and *jati* (caste, clan and race earlier taboos and customs, superstitions and rituals etc). Thus the baptism symbolised a rebirth. The Hindu names were changed and the initiates were given one family name 'Singh' (Lion). The Guru gave him a distinct identity of keeping the 'Five K's'. These emblems were prescribed for the *Khalsa* as obligatory symbols. These were- *Kesh* (unshorn hair), *Kangah* (comb), *Kach* (underwear), *Kara* (iron bangle), *Kirpan* (sword). The Guru intended to create the *Khalsa* as an armed body of revolutionaries who were to carry out his mission by open profession thereof. In addition, the converts to the *Khalsa* fold were to observe strict rules of code of conduct *rehat* and were not to use tobacco or any other sort of intoxicants and not to eat animals which had been slaughtered by being bled to death, as was customary with the Muslim called *Halal* but to take only *Jhatka* meat, where the animal had been dispatched with a single blow.

The Guru wanted to preserve and develop purity in the Sikh character. He emphasized on the cultivation of virtue and moral behaviour. Family life and domestic stability were regarded as

necessary to the basic development of moral character of the *Khalsa*. With the above injunction Guru Gobind Singh put a ban on adultery. The worship of idols, graves, cenotaphs and cremation grounds was forbidden.¹⁹ The Guru preached his *Khalsa* to live in harmony and mutual cooperation. At the end of the Oath taking of the *Amrit* ceremony the Guru hailed the converts with a new mode of greeting:

Wah Guru ji ka Khalsa

Wah Guruji ki Fateh

(The *Khalsa* belongs to God and so does victory belong to Him).

This motto generated a spirit of optimism and humility because the Divine cause was bound to succeed sooner or later and the spirit of total surrender to God's Will involved no credit for the participant. Therefore the *Khalsa* was deeply grounded in the spirit of humility and service to humanity. The acceptance of *Khalsa* ideology naturally meant becoming full time revolutionaries. An important part of the *Khalsa* discipline was 'the dedication of one's body, soul and belongings to the Guru or God. It was Guru Gobind Singh's unique way of creating a commune. Therefore, dedication of oneself to the *Khalsa* was dedication to God. Having initiated the *Panj Piyaras* Guru Gobind Singh stepped up before them with folded hands; and asked them to baptize him into the new fraternity in the same way as he had baptized them. After this there remained no difference between the Guru and his baptised Sikhs. They were supposed to be his other self and beloved ideal :-

Khalsa mero roop hai khas.

Thus was created the *Khalsa*. The court poet of Guru Gobind Singh, Kavi Sainpat records in his account *Gursobha* that, the *Khalsa* was created to destroy the evil-doer (*asur and durjan*). Koer Singh the author of *Gurbilas Patshahi 10* writes that after the initiation ceremony of the *Khalsa*, the Guru gave instructions to initiates to destroy the (tyrants) the Mughal forces (and you) rule for ever. The later Sikh historical sources record the same tradition.

The creation of the *Khalsa* was a historic event unrelated to any local situation. It was in fulfilment of the Guru's divine mission to propagate righteousness and to destroy evil.

Guru Gobind Singh bestowed sovereignty on the *Khalsa* for plebian objective. The *Khalsa* owed allegiance to God and to none else. In its social implications, it meant loyalty only to the Guru's mission which had been sanctified by God Himself. The *Khalsa* was imbued with the spirit of liberty and independence and disclaimed all earthly masters. They were the servants of God.

Guru Gobind Singh issued *Hukamnama* to the 'Sangat' (congregation) of Kabul on 26 Jeth, 1756 B.K. (23 May, 1699 A.D.) only four weeks after the foundation of the *Khalsa* in which he mentioned the *Rehat* and five symbols (k's) in clear words.²⁰ It is to be pointed out that at the time of the creation of the *Khalsa*, there was a rift on ideological grounds in the Sikhs ranks. Some people expressed their inability to forgo traditional customs and practices and they protested against the strict code of conduct (*Rehat*) of the *Khalsa*. The Khatris and the Brahmins remained aloof. Sikhs drawn from higher castes disassociated themselves from the *Khalsa*. But this attitude did not effect the process of recruitment to the *Khalsa* fold and after sometime even the spirit of defiance gradually died down.²¹

Right from its foundation, the *Khalsa* had become popular. It is said that about eighty thousand Sikhs were converted into the *Khalsa* followed by mass baptism all over northern India.²² The Guru had dinned into the timid peasantry of the Punjab that they must:

Take the broom of divine knowledge in hand, and sweep away the filth of timidity from the mind.²³

Thereby, Guru Gobind Singh trained the sparrow to haunt the hawk and one man to fight a legion. Within a few months the chosen people of Punjab, were ready and fully armed and with a crusader's zeal to build a new commonwealth. They implicitly believed:

The *Khalsa* shall rule.

Their enemies will be scattered. Only they that seek refuge will be saved.²⁴

These lines have become an integral part of the Sikhs ethos. They are repeated every time after the supplicatory prayer of the Sikhs; the *Ardas*.

Notes and References:

1. In most of the contemporary and near contemporary sources the name of Guru Gobind Singh has been referred as Gobind Rai, but in the *Hukamnamas* (epistles) of his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, the name of Guru Gobind Singh has been given as Gobind Dass-see *Hukamnamase* ed. Ganda Singh, Pub. Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967, *Hukamnamas* No. 21, p 103, No. 23, p. 107.

The place of birth of Guru Gobind Singh has been authenticated by the autobiography of the Guru itself:

ਮੂਰ ਪਿਤ ਪੁਰਖ ਵਿਯਸਿ ਪਯਾਨਾ ॥
ਭਾਂਤਿ ਭਾਂਤਿ ਕੇ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਨਾ ॥
ਜਬ ਹੀ ਜਾਤ ਤ੍ਰਿਬੇਣੀ ਭਏ ॥
ਪੁੰਨ ਦਾਨ ਦਿਨ ਕਰਤ ਬਿਤਏ ॥
ਤਹੀਂ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਹਮਾਰਾ ਭਯੋ ॥
ਪਟਨਾ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਬਿਖੇ ਭਯੋ ਲਯੋ ॥

—Apni Katha, Bachitar Natak, *Sri Dasam Granth Sahib Ji*, p. 59.

2. This date has been corroborated by a numbers of Sikh sources see Koer Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi Das*, (1751), ed. Shamsher Singh Ashok, Pub. Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968, p. 30; Sukha Singh, *Gurbilas Dasvin Patshahi*, (1797), Lahore, 1912, p.41; Bhai Santok Singh, *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth* also gives the same *Thit* and month see Vol. 10, p. 4272 (Pub. Bhasha Vibhag Punjab, Patiala)1992; Ganda Singh (ed., *Makhiz-i-Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*, Amritsar, 1949; p.7; Gian Singh Giani, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Pub. BhashaVibhag Punjab, Patiala 1970, Vol I, p. 743; M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Pub. S. Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1963, Vol. IV, p. 344, Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Orient-Longmans, Bombay, Vol I, 1950, p. 54.

On the site of the house at Patna in which Gobind Rai was born and where he spent his early childhood now stands a sacred shrine, Takhat Sri Harimandar Sahib, one of the five most honoured seats of religious authority (*takht*, means throne) for the Sikhs.

3. Koer Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 32, Sukha Singh *op.cit.*, p. 39, Santokh Singh, *op. cit.*, Vol. 12, Ansu 16, 17, 18.
4. Sohan Singh Sheetal, *Manukhta De Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji*, pub.

Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 2nd edition, 2000, pp. 16-18; D.K. Verma, *Guru Gobind Singh, On the Canvas of History*, Pub. Harman Publishing House, New Delhi, 1995, p. 33.

5. Gurdwara Sangat Maini Sahib, Patna commemorates the site of the Palace of Raja Fateh Chand Maini.
6. His father, Guru Tegh Bahadur intent on his all round development so that his genius might grow in full and multifaceted personality. Guru Gobind Singh himself confirms this arrangement:

ਮੱਦ੍ ਦੇਸ ਹਮ ਕੋ ਲੇ ਆਏ ॥

ਭਾਂਤਿ ਭਾਂਤਿ ਦਾਈਅਨ ਦੁਲਰਾਏ ॥

ਕੀਨੀ ਅਨਿਕ ਭਾਂਤਿ ਤਨ ਰੱਛਾ ॥

ਦੀਨੀ ਭਾਂਤਿ ਭਾਂਤਿ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਛਾ ॥

—Apni Katha, Bachitar Natak, *Sri Dasam Granth Sahib Ji*, p. 59.

7. Information about the training of Gobind Rai has been collected in a fragmented form from various Sikh sources. See Chaupa Singh *Rehatname* in *Guru Khalse de Rehatname* (unpublished Mss, ed. Shamsher Singh Ashok), Sikh History Research Board, Amritsar, 1979. Preserved in Sikh Reference Library, Golden Temple Amritsar; Kesar Singh Chhibbar, *Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka* (1769), ed. Ratan Singh Jaggi, Published in 'Parakh', Research Bulletin of Punjabi Language and Literature, Punjab University Chandigarh, Vol. 11, 1972, p. 99; Koer Singh *Gurubilas Patshahi* 10, p.48, Gian Singh Giani, *Sri Guru Panth Prakash* (1874 A.D), Pub. Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 181. Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 25; Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 69, D.K. Verma *Guru Gobind Singh on The Canvas of History*, pub. Harnam Publishing House, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 33-36.
8. Bhai Sarup Singh Koshish, *Guru Kian Sakhian*, (1790) (ed. Piara Singh Padam), Pub. Singh Brothers, Amritsar, Third edition, 1995, *Sakhi* 28, pp. 78-79. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 371-372; Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29; See also P.N.K. Bamzai, *History of Kashmir*, p. 371. Guru Gobind Singh in his autobiography, *Bachitar Natak* wrote:

ਤਿਲਕ ਜੰਝੂ ਰਾਖਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਤਾਕਾ ॥

ਕੀਨੋ ਬਡੋ ਕਲੂ ਮਹਿ ਸਾਕਾ ॥

ਸਾਧਨ ਹੇਤਿ ਇਤੀ ਜਿਨਿ ਕਰੀ ॥

ਸੀਸੁ ਦੀਆ ਪਰੁ ਸੀ ਨ ਉਚਰੀ ॥

ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਸਾਕਾ ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਆ ॥

ਸੀਸੁ ਦੀਆ ਪਰ ਸਿਰਹੁ ਨ ਦੀਆ ॥

ਨਾਟਕ ਚੇਟਕ ਕੀਏ ਕੁਕਾਜਾ ॥

ਪ੍ਰਭ ਲੋਗਨ ਕਹ ਆਵਤ ਲਾਜਾ ॥

ਦੋਹਰਾ ॥ ਠੀਕਰ ਫੋਰਿ ਦਿਲੀਸਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪੁਰ ਕੀਆ ਪਯਾਨ ॥
 ਤੇਗਬਹਾਦਰ ਸੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਕਰੀ ਨ ਕਿਨਹੂੰ ਆਨ ॥
 ਤੇਗਬਹਾਦਰ ਕੇ ਚਲਤ ਭਯੋ ਜਗਤ ਕੋ ਸੋਕ ॥
 ਹੈ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਭਯੋ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਸੁਰਲੋਕ ॥

To protect their right to wear their castemark and sacred thread.
 Did he (Guru Tegh Bahadur), in the dark age, perform the supreme sacrifice.

To help the saintly, he went to the utmost limits
 He offered his head but heaved not a sigh of regret
 He offered martyrdom for the sake of his moral principles,
 He lost this life but not the celestial horizon of his communion with God.

He disdained to perform miracles or jugglers tricks.
 For these fill men of God with shame.

Having broken the potsherd (of his body) on the head of the ruler of Delhi.

He went to the abode of the Lord.

None has ever performed such a unique deed, that Guru Tegh Bahadur has.

When Tegh Bahadur passed away, there was mourning through the world.

The world was stunned and amazed (at his laying down his life for other's religion).

While the shouts of glory, glory, glory rent the whole heaven,

-English Translation by Sangat Singh, *The Sikhs in History*, First edition, Pub. by author, New York, U.S.A., 1995, p. 51.

—Bachitar Natak, *Sri Dasam Granth Sahib Ji*, Vol. I, p. 54.

10. It is said that when the head of the martyred Guru Tegh Bahadur was brought to Guru Gobind Singh by Bhai Jaita at Anandpur Sahib, he asked the Ranghreta Sikh (converted from low caste who had brought it from Delhi; 'how many Sikhs had sacrificed themselves alongwith the Guru?' He was told 'only two (three) sacrificed themselves.' The Guru remarked; 'But the Sikhs are so many in number?' The answer given was, 'All turned their back to the faith. All slipped back in the populace.' There was no distinguishing mark for a Sikh to prevent that from happening. This provoked the Guru to say. 'I shall assign such distinguishing marks of the Sikhs that a Sikh would be recognizable even among thousands.'

—*Rehatnama Bhai Chaupa Singh*, op. cit., p. 19.

There are two incidents recorded in the contemporary Persian sources which throw light that Guru Tegh Bahadurs martyrdom led to the first

acts of militancy at the peoples level. *Maasir-i-Alamgiri* (p. 94) records two such incidents - the first one in June-July 1676 when a compaigner flung a stick at Aurangzeb when he was mounting a horse in the compounds of Dewan-i-Aam, and the other on Friday, October 27, 1676, when a disciple of Guru Tegh Bahadur flung two bricks at Aurangzeb, one of which reached the chair where he was seated. The attempts by the common man to punish the ruler of Delhi were symptomatic of the change that was taking place in the Sikh society. It blazed a new trail of commitment to an open struggle against organised oppression of the state. Guru Gobind Singh had to build from that. That led to his evolving the doctrine of *dharamayudh*, of waging righteous war against the forces of evil, tyranny and oppression of all sorts using religion as a social catalyst.

—See Sangat Singh, *The Sikhs in History*, pp. 5 1-52.

11. See *Hukamnama Dasvein Guru Gobind Singh Ji da* addressed to Bhai Rupa, asking Bhai Rupa to care for the pasturing of the horses, mares, cows, oxen etc. of the troops (*Laskar*) of the Guru.

—*Hukamnama* No. 34, *Hukamname* ed. Ganda Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967.

See also *Hukamnama* No. 35 of Guru Gobind Singh addressed to the Sangat of Dacca, Chatgaon, Sondeep, Silhat etc. for procuring a war elephant of good quality. *Hukamnama* No. 37 of Guru Gobind Singh addressed to the Sangat of Dacca to send arms and armour. *Hukamnama* No. 42, addressed to Bhai Sangatia dated Phagun Sudi 5, *Samvat* 1750 (19 Feb 1694 AD.) asking for a canon (*Tupak*) ancillary material. *Hukamnama* No. 43 of Guru Gobind Singh addressed to Bhai Taloka and Bhai Rama, dated Bhadon 2, *Samvat* 1753 (2 August 1696 AD.) asking to come alongwith horsemen (*aswar*). *Hukamnama* No. 44 addressed to Sangat Rupe Ki, dated Bhadon 2, *Samvat* 1753, *Bikrami* (2 August 1696 AD.) asking for horsemen (*aswar*), foot soldiers (*piyada*), gunner (*bandukchi*) etc. *Hukamnama* No. 54 of Guru Gobind Singh addressed to Bhai Mehar Chand Peshkar Kufia Nawis (intelligence reporter), dated Phagun 10, 1758 *Bikrami* (6 Feb, 1702 AD.) asking to come fully armed (*hathiar ban ke awana*). *Hukamnama* No. 57 of Guru Gobind Singh addressed to Bhai Brindaban Gulal Chand, dated Phagun 10, 1758 *Bikrami* (6 Feb, 1702 A.D.) asking to come fully armed (*hathiar ban ke awana*). *Hukamnama* No. 60 of Guru Gobind Singh addressed to Bhai Sukhia, Bhai Prasa, dated 1761 *Bikrami* (1704 AD.) asking for horsemen (*aswar*), Foot soldier (*piyada*) gunner (*bandukchi*) and able bodied youngmen (*bhale bhale juwan*). *Hukamnama* No. 61 of Guru Gobind Singh addressed to Sangat Chole di (Majha) dated Chet 6, *Samvat* 1762 *Bikrami* (4 March, 1706 AD.) asking to come fully armed. *Hukamnama* No. 63 of Guru Gobind Singh

addressed to the *Sangat* of Dhaul dated *Katak* 1, 1704 *Bikrami* (2 Oct, 1707 A.D.) asking to come fully armed.

Sainapat, the court poet of Guru Gobind Singh testifies the action taken by the Guru against the *Masands* as :

ਤਜ ਮਸੰਦ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਏਕ ਜਪ ਯਹਿ ਬਿਬੇਕ ਤਹਾ ਕੀਨ ॥
 ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸੋ ਸੇਵਕ ਮਿਲੇ ਨੀਰ ਮਧਿ ਜੋ ਮੀਨ ॥੧੨੨॥
 ਜਗਤ ਉਧਾਰਨ ਕਾਰਨੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀਓ ਬਿਚਾਰ ।
 ਕਰ... ਮਸੰਦ ਤਵ ਦੂਰ ਸਬ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਕਰ ਸੰਸਾਰ ॥੧੩੧॥
 ਮੰਨਤ ਗੋਲਕ ਅਰ ਦਸਵੰਧ ।
 ਘਰਿ ਮੈ ਰਾਖੇ ਤਜੋ ਮਸੰਦ ।
 ਭੇਟ ਕਾਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਹੋਇ ।
 ਜਾਇ... ਹਜੂਰਿ ਚੜਾਵੈ ਸੋਇ ॥੧੪੧॥
 ਕਹਨਹਾਰ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਕਰਤੇ ਕੀਆ ।
 ਕਰ ਮਸੰਦ ਸਭਿ ਦੂਰਿ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਕਰਿ ਲੀਆ ॥੧੪੮॥

—Sainapat, *Sri Gursobha*, pp. 79-81.

Hukamnama No. 64 of Guru Gobind Singh addressed to the *Sangat* of Khara dated *Katak* 1, *Samvat* 1764 *Bikrami*, (2 Oct 1707 A.D.) also ordains *Sangat* to come fully armed.

12. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, 1469-1839, pub. Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1977, p.77.

13. ਹਮ ਇਹ ਕਾਜ ਜਗਤ ਮੇ ਆਏ॥
 ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਪਠਾਏ॥
 ਜਹਾਂ ਤਹਾਂ ਤੁਮ ਧਰਮ ਬਿਥਾਰੇ॥
 ਦੁਸਟ ਦੋਖਿਯਨਿ ਪਕਰਿ ਪਛਾਰੇ॥
 ਯਾਹੀ ਕਾਜ ਧਰਾ ਹਮ ਜਨਮੇ॥
 ਸਮਝ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਾਧੂ ਸਭ ਮਨਮੇ॥
 ਧਰਮ ਚਲਾਵਨ ਸੰਤ ਉਬਾਰਨ॥
 ਦੁਸਟ ਸਭਨ ਕੋ ਮੂਲ ਉਪਾਰਨ॥

—Dasam Granth, pp. 57-58.

14. 'Jaap Sahib', *Dasam Granth*, pp 7-8.
15. 'Ramavtar', Benati Chaupai, *Ibid.* pp.1386-87.
16. ਦੀਨਨ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਲ ਕਰੈ ਨਿਤ ਸੰਤ ਓਬਾਰਨ ਗਨੀਮਨ ਗਾਰੇ

—Tavprasad Sawayya, *Ibid.*, p.34.

17. ਮੈਂ ਆਪਨਾ ਸੁਤ ਤੋਹਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ॥
 ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਚਰ ਕਰਬੇ ਕੋਹ ਸਾਜਾ॥
 ਜਾਹਿ ਤਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਚਲਾਇ॥
 ਕਬੂਧਿ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਲੋਕ ਹਟਾਇ॥

—Dasam Granth, pp. 57.

18. See *Hukamaname* of Guru Gobind Singh addressed to various Sikh *Sangats* denouncing the *Masand* system and commanding his followers to establish direct contact with the Guru. See *Hukamname* Nos. 21, 46-59 in *Hukamaname*, Ed. Ganda Singh, also see *Hukamnama* of Guru Gobind Singh denouncing the *Masand* system dated *Samvat* 1758 Chet 2, Friday (A.D. 1701), Personal collection of Madan jit Kaur gifted to Government Museum and Art Gallery Sector 10-C, Chandigarh.
19. *Dasam Granth*. p.712.
20. For full details about this *Hukamnama* see foot note 51, Chapter IV.
21. Detailed narration related to this reaction within the Sikh community has been recorded by Saina Pat, the court poet of Guru Gobind Singh in his work *Gursobha* in Chapter VI and VII.
22. See Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, pp. 85-86.
23. ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕੀ ਬਚਨੀ ਮਨਹੁ ਹਾਥ ਲੈ ਕਾਤਰਤਾ ਕੁਤਵਾਰ ਬੁਹਾਰੇ ॥
—*Dasam Granth*, p. 57.
24. Bhai Nand Lal, *Tankhahnama*, verse 62, p. 199 in *Bhai Nand Lal Granthvali*, Ed. Ganda Singh, Malako Malaysia, 1968.

ARMED STRUGGLE

After the creation of the *Khalsa*, Guru Gobind Singh began to prepare himself for defence and future trouble with the Mughal forces which he knew lay ahead of him. He built a massive wall around the fort of Anandpur Sahib and stocked it with the weapons of war. But these preparations made for defensive purposes excited the jealousy of the neighbouring hill Rajas. Raja Bhim Chand of Bilaspur was particularly envious of Guru Gobind Singh's growing power, wealth and armed strength. Under the pretext of danger to the defence of their states, Raja Bhim Chand and some other hill chiefs joined together and demanded that the Guru vacate Anandpur and pay the amount for the territory he was occupying. Since the land had been purchased by Guru Tegh Bahadur and so it legally belonged to Guru Gobind Singh, he refused to vacate. This issue led to the first battle of Anandpur (1701). The hill Rajas failed to oust the Guru.

Sainapat, the author of *Gursobha*, who was closely associated with the Guru as a resident poet in his *Darbar* at Anandpur has described almost all the battles fought by Guru Gobind Singh (Chapter II-IV and VIII-XII).

Two years afterwards, the hill chiefs again formed a confederacy against the Guru and approached the Mughal Emperor to support them against the Sikhs. A great help was extended to them by the Mughal Government. In fact the growing power of

Guru Gobind Singh and the rapid increase in the number of the *Khalsa* had aroused fear in the Mughal ruler. By the order of Aurangzeb, the Mughal forces from Sirhind and Lahore joined the hill *rajas* to destroy the *Khalsa*. Anandpur Sahib was surrounded by combination of hillmen and Mughals. At first the gallant band of the Guru kept the enemy at bay. Surrounded by heavy odds the Guru's army took refuge in Anandpur fort, where they were besieged for many months, with all supplies and communications cut off. Eventually, some Sikhs became frustrated and forty of them demanded to leave the fort. The Guru asked them to write a disclaimer (*bedava*) which they did and left the fort. The Guru intended to hold the fort for some time. Meanwhile, Emperor Aurangzeb then sent a written assurance of safety of all Sikhs, if the Guru agreed to leave the fort. At the insistence of his mother, Mata Gujari, the Guru agreed to leave only on the condition that the Mughal army would allow his treasure safe passage first. All these assurances were betrayed by the Mughals. The Sikhs evacuated the fort but contrary to their solemn oaths the imperial army and the hillmen came in pursuit. Forced by circumstances Guru Gobind Singh set fire to his stores and abandoned his headquarters at Anandpur Sahib on a wintry night in December, 1705. The darkness of night and drizzle, added to the confusion of evacuation. As the Guru and his Sikhs came out of the gate the, mughal army attacked them. While crossing the river Sarsa the Guru and his elder two sons got separated from younger sons and their mother. Guru Gobind Singh entrusted his mother, Mata Gujari and two younger sons, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh to their old servant Gangu, but he betrayed his master and handed over the children and the mother of the Guru to the nearest Mughal official at Morinda, who in turn handed them over to Wazir Khan, the Faujdar of Sirhind. These two little sons of Guru Gobind Singh (Sahibzada Jujhar Singh aged 9 and Sahibzada Fateh Singh aged 7 years old) proved wonderfully brave and committed to their family tradition spurned the offer to change their religion and stood firm in the midst of inhuman torture and accepted death. Wazir Khan, the Faujdar of Sirhind cruelly put the children to death (they were cemented alive into a wall) in inspite of the protest of the Nawab of Malerkotla, a devotee of Guru Gobind Singh.¹ Sucha Nand, the

Peshkar (Diwan) of Wazir Khan played a vicious role in the massacre of the children of Guru Gobind Singh by instigating him for this inhuman act where as another *diwan* of Wazir Khan, Todar Mall sold all his property to get permission for the cremation of the dead bodies of the Gurus martyred innocent children. The grandmother of the children could not survive the shocking incident and fell down dead as soon as she heard the sad news. The Guru was completely unaware of this tragedy. After abandoning the Anandpur Sahib fort, Guru Gobind Singh moved towards Chamkaur, where he took refuge in an old mud-fort.² Soon the fort was surrounded by the Mughal army. The siege lasted for a few days. There was a fierce fight in which the Guru and a small band of Sikhs (40 Sikhs) kept the enemy at bay and put up super-human fight against a thousands of troops of the Mughal army.³ They fought with gallantry and died a hero's deaths.⁴ Among those who fell at Chamkaur were Guru's elder sons Sahibzada Ajit Singh aged 18 and Sahibzada Jujhar Singh aged 15 and 35 devoted Sikhs. The long and fierce siege of Anandpur Sahib and the battle of Chamkaur were only a proving ground for the mettle of supreme sacrifice of the Guru's Sikhs. At this stage there were only six souls left in the Garhi of Chamkaur. Guru Gobind Singh himself and five other Sikhs i.e. Bhai Sant Singh, Bhai Sangat Singh, Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Dharam Singh and Bhai Man Singh. The five Sikhs counselled together and waited upon the Guru as '*Panj Piaras*' and urging upon him the prudence and necessity of his escape from Chamkaur for the future of his mission. The Guru never wished to leave them but at last yielded to their joint decision and thereby gave legal sanction to the authority of the *Panj Piaras* as the decision making body among the Sikhs. The Guru was at a most critical moment of his life and yet he chose to infuse a democratic spirit in the temporal and spiritual affairs of the Panth and consolidated the institutional set up of the Sikh solidarity. When all seemed lost, a Sikh, Sant Singh who resembled Guru Gobind Singh put on the Guru's clothes and went out the stockade to fight. As decided by the *Panj Piaras*, the Guru was requested to escape in the darkness of the night for the sake of his mission alongwith the remaining three Sikhs. The Guru got separated from his companions (who were caught and

killed by the Mughals) as he entered the jungle of Machiwara. They were all being pursued by the Mughal army. The story of his wandering is a romance of hair breath escape of days and nights spent through the thorny forests of Machiwara. Here he wrote his famous song- *Hal Maridan da Kehna* to the Almighty in a despondent mood:

Beloved Friend, beloved God,
Thou must bear Thy servant's, plight
When Thou art not near.
The comfort's cloak is as a pall of pest.
The home is like a serpents nest.
The wine chokes like the hangman's noose,
The rim of the goblet is like an assassin's knife,
But with Thee shall I in adversity dwell,
Without Thee life of ease is life in hell.⁵

Exhausted with the hazards of his risky journey and loosing all his family but still full of faith and courage to continue his patriotic campaign for the protection of the land of his nation, the Guru wrote in anguish to Emperor Aurangzeb and challenged his entry into the Punjab:

*I shall strike fire under the hoofs of your horses and I will not let you drink the water of my Punjab.*⁶

During his wandering in the jungles of Machiwara the Guru was eventually found by two Muslim followers - Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan. These Pathans dressed the Guru as a Muslim Pir and carried him on a palanquin calling him *Uch-Ka-Pir*. The Guru being in disguise could not be recognised by the Mughal sentries and was allowed to proceed. That was the end of the pursuit of the Mughal forces against Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru reached the village of Jatpura, where he was received by the Muslim Nawab, Rai Kala of Raikot in A.D. 1705. While still at Jatpura, the Guru learnt another heart breaking news of the barbarous and brutal murder of his two younger sons - Sahibzada Zorawar Singh aged nine and Sahibzada Fateh Singh aged seven, and the death of his own mother from the shock. Guru Gobind Singh took the sad news with supreme composure and stoic calm but decided to fight the

enemy to finish. The Guru took leave of Rai Kalha and moved forward. The news of the dastardly murder of the Guru's innocent sons spread all over the country and thousands of the Sikhs flocked to the Guru's camp at Kot Kapura to help him avenge the crime. Here Guru Gobind Singh got the news that Wazir Khan's forces were marching against him. The Guru and his Sikhs gathered near the village Khidrana. A fierce battle was fought between the Mughal forces and the Sikhs at Khidrana in 1706. The forty Sikhs who had earlier deserted the Guru at Anandpur Sahib and had returned to their homes, but being shamed by their woman folk for disloyal conduct were sent back to the Guru's army. A Sikh lady, Mai Bhago joined them and led them to the Guru's camp at Khidrana. They fought gallantly against the Mughals till they died. The Guru arrived at the battlefield and examined his Sikhs one by one and took them back into his compassionate warm bosom. The Guru blessed these forty Sikhs for they died as martyrs and tore up the letter of disclaimer (*bedava*) submitted by them during the battle of Anandpur. But, now they died on the battlefield writing their signatures afresh in blood. These martyrs are known as 40 *Muktas* and are, remembered in the daily prayer (*Ardas*) of the Sikhs. Mai Bhago, the commandant of the forty *Muktas* lay unconscious on the battlefield. The Guru nursed her to recovery. She remained in the Guru's service till death at Nanded in 1708.⁷ The village of Khidrana was renamed Mukatsar (the pool of salvation). Guru Gobind Singh spent almost a year in the country around Mukatsar. The stay proved most fruitful. Thousands of Jats of the Malwa region accepted baptism and joined the *Khalsa* fraternity; among them were the ancestors of the ruling houses of Patiala, Nabha and Jind. Then the Guru moved towards Talwandi Sabo (which is now called Damdama Sahib, meaning resting place). On his way to Talwandi Sabo the Guru halted for sometime at Dina. From this place Guru Gobind Singh had sent a letter called the *Zafarnama* (the Epistle of Victory) consisting of 135 couplets in Persian language in reply to the summons from Emperor Aurangzeb. This is a historical document, a treatise on ethics of polity which shows a most acute and intelligent mind. The *Zafarnama* is not a petition but a letter of remonstrance to Aurangzeb for the brutal bloodshed of innocent people and the murder of his four innocent sons by his

men. The *Zafarnama* also throws some light on the battles of Anandpur and Chamkaur in Dec 1704. In this letter, the Guru unambiguously condemned the Emperor for his errors.

The Guru's emissary, Daya Singh and Dharam Singh carried the letter to Aurangzeb in Deccan, where the Emperor was entangled in his war against the Shia States of Southern India. The letter reached Aurangzeb a year before his death. It seems Aurangzeb was apparently moved by the contents of the letter and issued orders to Munim Khan, the deputy governor of Lahore that the Guru was not to be molested any further and invited the Guru to come and see him. The psychological effect of the *Zafarnama* might be seen in the change in Aurangzeb's inner consciousness and his profound sense of frustration at the failure of his religious fanaticism and his state policy which is expressed in one of his last and most intimate letters to his sons.⁸ From Dina the Guru retired to Talwandi Sabo and stayed here for about a year. At Talwandi Sabo the Guru stayed with an influential Sikh Datta and busied himself in writing with his disciple Bhai Mani Singh and reproduced the whole volume of *Adi Granth* incorporating the *shaloks* (hymns) of his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur and compiled its final form. He engaged Bhai Mani Singh for transcription of the *Bir* and handed over the responsibility of arranging stationery for the job to Baba Deep Singh. Gurdwara Likhansar Sahib, located on Takhat Damdama Sahib premises stands at the site of the completion *Sampooranta* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The Guru also recollected his own writings which were subsequently put together by Bhai Mani Singh and entitled as *Dasven Patshah Ka Granth* or *Dasam Granth*. It is a monumental work of heroic proportions. On account of intense literary activities Talwandi Sabo became a great seat of learning and earned the title of *Guru Ki Kashi* (Benaras of the Guru).⁹

Emperor Aurangzeb's message was received at Talwandi Sabo. At that time Aurangzeb was in South. The Guru left Talwandi Sabo for Deccan to meet the Emperor. When the Guru reached the neighbourhood of Baghaur in Rajputana, he heard the news of the death of the Emperor at Ahmednagar (March 2, 1707).

There ensued a war of succession between the sons of Aurangzeb, Bahadur Shah (Prince Muazzam) who was the eldest and his younger brother Prince Azam, who had also proclaimed himself Emperor. On June 8, 1707, a battle was fought at Jajau near Agra in which Bahadur Shah was victorious. It is generally believed in the Sikh sources that in this war of succession the sympathies of Guru Gobind Singh were with Prince Muazzam (Bahadur Shah) 'the rightful heir to the Mughal throne. It is said that the Guru had helped Bahadur Shah with a detachment of his men in the battle of Jajau, June 1707, Indeed, Guru Gobind Singh's heroic action and his great qualities as a man and as a religious leader impressed Bahadur Shah, who sought to make some atonement for his father's undesirable treatment of the Guru and his people. The Emperor invited the Guru to Agra.¹⁰ He received the Guru with utmost respect and kindness and presented him with a rich robe of honour and a jewelled scarf (*dhukh dukhi*) worth 60 thousand rupees.¹¹ In one of the report from the court of Bahadur Shah we find reference to Guru Gobind coming to the presence of Bahadur Shah. This report from *Akhbart-I-darbar-i-mu'alla* reads as : " S Jumada I, R. Y. I (4 August 1707) Gobind the Nanaki came armed in accordance with order, and presented himself, making an offering of 100 *ashrafis* (gold coin). A robe of honor and *padak* (madallion) set with precious stones was given to him, and he was permitted to leave".¹² The *Hukamnama* of Guru Gobind Singh of which a photograph copy is available in the Sikh History Research Department of the Khalsa College Amritsar, was written from the neighbourhood of Agra on the 1st of Katik, *Samvat* 1764 Bikrami (October 1707), to the Sikh *Sangat* of Dhaul. The Guru informs them that he had an interview with Bahadur Shah (4th Jamadi-ul-Awwal 1119 AH-2 August 1707) and received from him gifts worth thousand of rupees and other things (referring to the negotiations that had brought him so far from Punjab) were progressing well and that he expected to soon return to Kahlur (Anandpur). He enjoins upon the entire (*Sangat*) Khalsa to come fully armed on his arrival at Kahlur. This demolishes the theory advanced by some of his biographers that on the death of his sons at Chamkaur and Sirhind, despairing of his Sikhs and of the people of the Punjab, he had left his country for Deccan in disgust, in order to induce the Rajputs

and the Marathas against the Mughals for fulfilment of his mission. The *Hukamnama* tells us in his (Guru's) own words that he expected to return to the Punjab and had in view some military operations there, for which he was issuing instructions to his Sikhs to join him on his arrival at Kahlur. It was only due to an accidental change in circumstances, the revolt of Prince Kambaksh, that the (Guru) had to accompany Bahadur Shah towards the South as the old negotiations were still underway.¹³

The Guru was pleased with the interview and saw the possibility of ending the clash with the Mughals. Guru Gobind Singh stayed at Agra for four months but the Emperor did not take any action against Wazir Khan the (Faujdar of Sirhind) and left for Rajputana. The Guru and his retinue of horsemen accompanied the imperial troops without participating in any of their battles. Meanwhile Emperor Bahadur Shah turned towards Deccan to suppress the rebellion of his younger brother, Prince Kambaksh. Seeing that there was no prospect of the Emperor agreeing to any proposal for the redress of his wrongs, the Guru broke off with the Emperor and came to Nanded, a small town on the banks of the river Godavari in the beginning of September, 1707. All along his march Guru Gobind Singh continued instructing his followers and those who cared to come to his 'prayer meetings'. The stay and activity of the Guru in this region has been mentioned in the official records of the Mughals.¹⁴ It is necessary to mention here that the nature of relationship between Emperor Bahadur Shah and Guru Gobind Singh has been misunderstood by some of the historians who have interpreted that Guru Gobind was a *mansabdar* of the Mughal Court and an employee of the State. There is no truth in this version. It is categorically evident from all the contemporary historical documents and reports of the court, *News of the Mughals (Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mu'alla)* states that the Guru never held any *mansab* (500 *Jat* and 500 *Sawar*) and never joined the ranks of Bahadur Shah. The Emperor simply revered the Guru as a *Darvesh* (holymen) and received him as a guest of honour.¹⁵ The Guru only accepted the presents and did not put on these items on his body as was the customary practice with the *mansabdars*. However, the Emperor paid no heed to the Guru's demand to punish Wazir Khan,

who was the major culprit for all the trouble and sufferings of the Guru and the people of the Punjab.

At Nanded, Guru Gobind Singh met a *bairagi* (monk) named Lachman Das/Madho Das, who had spent the last fifteen years of his life in a hermitage on the banks of river Godavari. The Guru converted him to the fold of *Khalsa* and renamed him Banda Singh, popularly known in history as Banda Singh Bahadur. According to another version Madho Das was renamed as Gurbaksh Singh after receiving *Amrit (pahul)* from the Guru. But this version is not accepted by the historians.

On his journey to South, Guru Gobind Singh had been pursued secretly by two Pathans from Sirhind, who were agents of Wazir Khan, the *Faujdar* of Sirhind, who wanted to prevent the Guru from turning the Emperor against him for his atrocities inflicted on the family of the Guru and the Sikhs. These Pathans came to Nanded and used to pay occasional visits to the Guru, with whom they became acquainted. One evening these Pathans entered the Guru's tent and, finding the Guru alone, stabbed him in the abdomen. The assassins were slain immediately. In the *Akhbarat-i-darbar-mu'alla* Reports, from Bahadur Shah court 1707-10, the name of one of the assassin has been mentioned as Jamshed Khan, who died at the hands of the Guru after he had fatally injured him.¹⁶ Guru's wounds were stitched and it was hoped that he would recover soon. It is said that Emperor Bahadur Shah sent an English surgeon to dress the wound of the Guru. The wound however did not heal and the Guru realised that his end was near. He assembled his followers and told them that the line of the personal Guruship was to end with him and the Sikhs were thereafter to look upon the *Adi Granth* (their Sacred Scripture) as the symbol of all Ten gurus and their constant guide *Guru Granth Sahib*. The Guru also ordained his *Khalsa* that henceforth the divine authority of the Guru would be in *Guru Granth Sahib* and the temporal authority of the community would rest with *Khalsa Panth* (collective leadership of the Sikhs). The Guru declared:

By Divine Command, I have proclaimed the Faith,
All Sikhs are now commanded to regard the *Granth* as

Guru;

Consider the *Granth* as the visible body of the *Guru*;

Those whose mind is clean, will find the *Guru* in the Word.¹⁷

Guru Gobind Singh died on 7 October, 1708 at Nanded. Gurdwara Takht Sri Hazur Sahib stands at the site where Guru Gobind Singh was cremated at Nanded. Sri Hazur Sahib is the fourth *Takht* of the Sikhs.

Before his death Guru Gobind Singh had commissioned Banda Singh to go to Punjab to help the downtrodden and punish the men who had persecuted the Sikhs and murdered his sons. The Guru charged him with the duty of leading the *Khalsa* against the onslaughts of Wazir Khan, the *Faujdar* of Sirhind and carry on the mission of *Dharam Yudh* of the *Khalsa* with commitment to the social emancipation and political freedom of the people of the Punjab. Therefore, Banda's commission was not merely to punish the offender but also to establish the rule of *Khalsa*. Banda Singh proved true to his task. Banda Singh left Deccan with a small band to northward and reached the vicinity of Delhi. He proclaimed his mission and issued letters ordering the Sikhs to join him fully armed. He also issued proclamation offering - protection to any one subjected to injustice or illtreatment.¹⁸ It evoked an overwhelming response from people of all faiths. Banda Singh left the neighbourhood of Delhi and traveled northwards along the Grand Trunk Road. The news of Banda's return to the Punjab was enough to put heart into the Malwa peasantry. Conquering Sonipat, Kaithal, Shadaura, Samana, Banda Singh proceeded on his triumphant march through the tract of Malwa and came to Sirhind. Wazir Khan and his family members and his *diwan* Sucha Nand were killed and Sirhind was stormed (May 24, 1710). The *Khalsa* was now the virtual master of the territories between the Jamuna and the Sutlej.¹⁹

The *Khalsa* under the command of Banda Singh Bahadur, swept over Punjab and wrested political power from the Mughals and established the first Sikh rule in Punjab. He introduced a new calendar, dating from the capture of Sirhind and struck coins in the

names of the names of the Gurus. His seal (*mohar*) had ture inscription in the names of the Gurus and also the motto of Sikh doctrines, the *deg* (or cauldron) the Guru's *langar* (free Kitchen) and *tegh* (the Sword of Khalsa) and *Fatch* (victory) of the *Khalsa* by the Grace of the Gurus.²⁰ The Khalsa was to take up the task where the Guru left it and to carry it on until its last logical end was reached under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur, who abolished *jagirdari* system and founded egalitarian society and a democratic political set up. In the subsequent course of history, the *Khalsa* was imparted a distinct individuality and a strong notion of unity through hardships suffered together in the long drawn struggle against the Mughals for the protection of their identity and survival of their religion. But nothing great is ever earned without pain and suffering. Thereby the *Khalsa* created by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699 reached its zenith in the later half of eighteenth century. The *Khalsa* was ever ready for selfless service, for upholding the vision of a regenerated humanity and it heralded a new era in the socio-cultural history of the Indian subcontinent.

Notes and References:

1. The Sikhs have always remembered the humanitarian act of the Nawab of Malerkotla with gratitude, and throughout their troubled relations with the Mughal power they have always spared the House of Malerkotla from their attacks. It was simply out of this amicable relationship between the Sikhs and the State of Malerkotla, that, after Partition of India, the Muslim population including the Nawab of Malerkotla preferred to remain in India. Even now this friendly tie is observed by both the parties and the Malerkotla House is allied with the Akali Dal in general elections of the State of the Punjab.
2. See *Sikh History From Persian Sources*, eds. J.S. Grewal and Irfan Habib, Pub. Talika, Indian History Congress 2001, Text 6, document on the Sikhs and Guru Gobind Singh from Ahkam-i-Alamgiri, 1703-07, p. 97.
3. Gurdwara Katalgarh or Saheedgarh stands at the site of the battle field of Chamkaur.
4. Gurdwara Tilak Asthan stands at the site of this portion of the fortres.
5. *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I. *Shabad Hazare* .
6. *Fatehnama or Nama-i-Guru Gobind Singh* in *Makhiz-i-Tawarikh-i-*

Sikhan, ed. Ganda Singh, Pub. History Society Khalsa College, Amritsar, 1949, couplet No. 13, p. 63. The couplets nos. 14 and 15 refer to the death of the two elder sons of Guru Gobind Singh. It reads:

It matters little if a jackal through cunning and treachery succeeds
in killing two lions cubs,

For the Lion himself lives to inflict retribute on you.

Subsequently in verse 98, the *Zafarnama* mentions the death of all four children of Guru.

7. Later Mai Bhago went to Nanded, Deccan and joined the Guru. She passed the rest of her life in a camp at Nanded. A Gurdwara stands in commemoration of the brave Sikh lady at the site of Mai Bhago's camp and stallion at Nanded.
8. See *Ruka at-i-Alamgiri* or Letters of Aurangzeb by J. H. Bilimoria, Pub. IDARAH-I-ADABIYAT-I-DILLI, Delhi, India, 1972.
9. It is said that one day Guru Gobind Singh flung a handful of reed pens-*kalam* over the heads of the congregation, saying :

Here we will create a pool of literature,
no one of my Sikhs should remain illiterate.

The *Rehatnama* of Bhai Desa Singh states:

Brother, the letters of the Gurumukhi alphabet,
let one Sikh learn from another.

After the independence of India, Taiwandi Sabo, Damdama Sahib has been recognised as the Fifth Takht (Throne) of the Sikh Panth.

10. See Bhim Sen's *Nuskha-i-Dilkusha* in *Sikh History From Persian Sources*, eds. J.S. Grewal and Irfan Habib p. 105.
11. The fact is recorded in contemporary documents both in Persian and Punjabi.
See also Sainapat *Gursobha*, Ch. XVI, verse 35.
12. See *Sikh History Form Persian Sources*, eds. J.S. Grewal and Irfan Habib p. 106.
13. The *Hukamnama* of Guru Gobind Singh of which a photographed copy is available in the Sikh History Research Department of the Khalsa College, Amritsar.

It was written from the neighbourhood of Agra on the 1st of Kartik, *Samvat* 1764 Bikrami (October 1707), to the Sikh *Sangat* of Dhaul. The Guru informs them that he had an interview with Bahadur Shah (4th Jamadi-ul-Awwal 1119 AH-2 August 1707) and received from him gifts worth sixty thousand rupees, among other things (referring to the negotiations that had brought him so far from the Punjab) were progressing well and that he expected to soon return to Kahlur

(Anandpur). He enjoins upon the entire (*sarbat*) Khalsa to come fully armed on his arrival at Kahlur.

14. Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol I, P. 95.
15. See *Sikh History From Persian Sources*, eds. G.S Grewal and Irfan Habib, p. 106.
16. *Ibid*, pp.107-108.
17. See chapter the Guruship and Succession of Sri. *Guru Granth Sahib*.
18. Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p 103.
19. See, *Sikh History From Persian Sources*. Eds. J.S. Grewal and Irfan Habib, p. 108.
20. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *Ashort History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I. p.82.

THE CREATION OF THE KHALSA AND PRESCRIBING THE SIKH ARTICLES OF FAITH

This chapter attempts to examine the ideological and historical importance of the creation of the *Khalsa* by Guru Gobind Singh. We shall also consider how far the observation of W. H. McLeod in his book, *Evolution of the Sikh Community* whereby he casts doubt on the events of the Baisakhi day 1699 A.D. are valid. McLeod describes this development of the Sikh community as due to the large scale influx of the Jats (agrarian community) in Guru Nanak's Panth rather than to the thoughtful policies and activities of Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh. McLeod questions the authenticity of the ceremony of the Baptism of the double-edged sword enacted by Guru Gobind Singh on March 30, 1699, the Baisakhi day. He also casts aspersions on the *raison de etre of the Khalsa Panth* bound by the articles of the faith, the five *Kakkars*.¹

McLeod has borrowed this thesis from J. S. Grewal, who was the first to float this idea.² McLeod concedes that 'Something certainly did happen on the Baisakhi day of 1699', but argues that the orthodox form of the *Khalsa Panth* and the *Khalsa* code of discipline indicate Jat influence. In his opinion the *Khalsa* code of discipline and the tradition of the five K's got evolved during the eighteenth century but came "to be related to the time and intention of Guru Gobind Singh."³

McLeod alleges that there is lack of historical evidence about the great event of the creation of the *Khalsa* and the prescribing of the five Sikh symbols by Guru Gobind Singh on the Baisakhi day of the year 1699. The Sikh tradition about this event is so logical and pregnant with significance, so deeply connected with the history of Sikh martyrdom and struggle, and so clearly supported by the Sikh sources that it cannot be rationally ignored. McLeod and Grewal have no doubt expressed themselves unambiguously, but they have brought no historical evidence, whatsoever, to substantiate their thesis of the 'Jat origin' of Sikh militancy. On the contrary, we find much good ground encompassed in *Gursobha*⁴ and *Gurbilas*⁵ traditions to uphold our contention that there was a purpose in the founding of the *Khalsa* and that the ceremony of the initiation of the *Khalsa* and its rites did take place on that auspicious day of Baisakhi. Sainapat, contemporary poet of Guru Gobind Singh, vouches for what transpired on that day. He states in no uncertain terms that Guru Gobind Singh created the *Khalsa* on that day and removed all the cobwebs from the minds of the Sikhs.⁶ Grewal concedes this point, but concludes that all this was for beating the *masands* and purifying the Sikhs. This is like shutting one's eyes from the great plan of the Gurus so explicitly explained in *Bachitar Natak* and as evident from the time of the fifth Guru. After all, the *masands* were not much of a problem with him as were the atrocities of the then Government on the non-Muslim subjects for which his father had laid down his life. He stood pledged for the continuation of the holy war (*dharam yudh*) which had become a great necessity because of the threats of the orthodox theocratic state as well as of the hostile attitude of the caste-ridden hill chieftains with a feudal mentality.

The creation of the *Khalsa* cannot be taken as a political manoeuvre, nor can it be attributed to the alleged pressure by the Jats or to their contribution to the militant struggle in the eighteenth century. The *Khalsa* has to be defined basically as a very important religious institution with far reaching meanings and consequences. One has to trace its genesis in the socio-political milieu of Guru Gobind Singh, and the perception of his mission and the Sikh *Dharma*. Both Grewal and McLeod ignore the crux of the issue that

the founding of the *Khalsa* was the epitome of the mission of Guru Gobind Singh as recorded in the *Gur Sobha*.⁷

The institution of *Khalsa* was conceived to play a definite functional role in the society. It was further given the support of a dynamic set of symbolic forms.⁸ We are fully aware of the lack of a sense of historicity among the early Sikh scholars. Moreover, the extraordinary circumstances following the founding of the *Khalsa* left little scope for the preservation of the contemporary historical records.

Recent researches on religious evolution have confirmed that religious symbolization is concerned with imagining the ultimate conditions of existence, whether external or internal.

If we try to examine the Sikh religious symbolization of articles of faith i.e. the five K's in accordance with the basic principles of Sociology of Religion on the following points :

- (i) The kind of the symbol system involved,
- (ii) The kind of religious action, it stimulates,
- (iii) The kind of social organisation in which this religious action occurs, and
- (iv) The implications for social action in general.⁹

It becomes evident that the origin of the set of five K's cannot be segregated from the founding of the Order of the *Khalsa* and cannot be placed somewhere later in the eighteenth century as a legacy of the Jat culture as asserted by J.S. Grewal and W.H. McLeod. Therefore our contention is that the founding of the *Khalsa* and the prescribing of the five K's are synchronous products of the Baisakhi day of 1699, sanctified by Guru Gobind Singh by the creation of the *Khalsa* at Anandpur Sahib.

Milieu Developments of far reaching consequences took place in the history of the Sikh community during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb (A.D. 1658-1707). It is a well known fact of Indian history that Aurangzeb could succeed to the Mughal throne after having killed all his brothers and nephews and imprisoning his father, Emperor Shah Jahan. Though master of a vast empire, he

was, thus, guilty and bore the stigma of ruthless killing of his kith and kin. To improve his public image, he made it known that he intended to establish a truly Islamic State in India. Thereby he hoped to woo the Muslim subjects and the orthodox elite groups. His real motive was, however, to gain political power. With a view to achieving this objective, he honestly manifested his conduct, behaviour and affairs of the state on the lines of puritan Islam. Himself a pupil of the *Hanfi* School of Islamic thought, he was a man of strong convictions with orthodox inclinations. His attitude towards his non-Muslim subjects was generated by this psyche.

The bias of Emperor Aurangzeb against his Hindu subjects is clearly evident from a series of decrees he issued for the destruction of the Hindu places of worship.¹⁰

In the earlier days of his governance in the Mughal province of Orissa, he had ordered his local officers in every town and village from Kattak to Mednipur to "pull down all temples including even clay huts, built during the last 10 to 12 years, and to allow no old temple to be repaired."¹¹ In A.D. 1661-62 a big temple was demolished at Mathura and a Jama Masjid was erected there in the heart of the Hindu population.¹²

This was the policy of temple destruction from the life history of Aurangzeb prior to his ascendancy to the throne. During his viceroyalty of Gujarat in 1644, he desecrated the newly built Hindu temple of Chintamani in Ahmedabad by killing a cow there and then converting the building into a mosque. At that time, he also ordered the demolition of many other Hindu temples in the province.¹³ From April 1665 onwards, the Hindus were made to pay custom duties twice as much as were being paid by the Muslims on all articles brought for sale.¹⁴ In 1667, Muslim subjects were exempted from payment of custom duties while the Hindus had to pay at the old rate of five percent.¹⁵ In 1668 public celebrations of Hindu fairs and festivals were stopped.¹⁶ On April 9, 1669, a general order was issued to demolish all the schools and temples of the infidels and to put down their religious teachings. In January 1670, the temple of Keshav Rao at Mathura was destroyed and the city was renamed Islamabad.¹⁷ The destruction of Hindu places of

worship was one of the chief duties of the *Muhtasibs* (censors of moral) who were appointed in all the sub-divisions and cities of the empire.¹⁸ The Hindus employed in public services, including clerks and accountants, were dismissed in 1671.¹⁹ The post of *Qanungo* could be retained by a Hindu on embracing Islam.²⁰ Others who accepted Islam received stipends, rewards, government jobs, even a release from jail, right to ancestral property and other privileges. The converts, riding on elephants followed by bands and flags were paraded through the streets and bazars.²¹ *Jazia* (poll-tax) was levied on all Hindus from April 2, 1679.²² The contemporary European traveller Manucci observes, 'Many Hindus who were unable to pay turned Muhammadan, to obtain relief from the insults of collection...Aurangzeb rejoices.'²³ In June 1680, the temples of Amber, the capital of Jaipur State, which was indeed the most loyal Hindu state, were demolished.²⁴ The characteristic Hindu dress, *dhoti*, so irritated and excited the imperial ire of the puritan Aurangzeb that, according to the Imperial Chronicles, *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-M'ualla*, on the 29th April 1682, when Syed Amjad, the Chief Censor reported that the Hindus went about dressed in *dhoti*, Ihtimam Khan, the Deputy Censor was ordered to announce by the beat of drum that the Hindus should wear *pyjamas* instead.²⁵

In March 1693, all the Hindus, except Rajputs, were ordered not to ride on elephants, fine horses and in palanquins or to carry arms.²⁶ According to Muhammad Latif, Aurangzeb had resolved that belief in one God and the Prophet should be, not the prevailing, but the only religion of the empire of Hindustan.²⁷ Certain Hindu religious establishments no doubt, enjoyed religious grants, and the subjugated Rajput states enjoyed freedom of worship, but their privilege was conditioned by their loyalty and support to the State. Discrimination against the Hindu masses was apparent at the surface level. Probably, these drastic steps were adopted to attack them psychologically and to suppress them so that they should never get emboldened to revolt against the State. It was for this reason that the strongest Hindu cultural centre of Northern India i.e. Benaras and Mathura, became targets of state persecution. The brutal suppression of the Jat (1699) and Satnami (1672)²⁸ revolts

are other burning examples of State tyranny. The liberal and freedom loving Sufis also could not save themselves from the wrath of the orthodox Emperor.²⁹ In subsequent years the Rajputs, Marathas and Sikhs, who aspired for freedom, were subjected to a ruthlessly benumbing treatment at the hands of the State.³⁰ The praxis of the creation of the *Khalsa* lies in the political milieu because, since the time of Jehangir, the State had become increasingly intolerant. This led to the earlier organisation of the Sikh society into a well-knit revolutionary movement.³¹

Aurangzeb adopted a resolute and uncompromising policy of repression and persecution of non-Muslims. Guru Tegh Bahadur, the Ninth *Guru* of the Sikhs, stood for religious freedom and became a martyr to this cause (the protection of *Tilak* and *Janeu*, symbols of Hinduism).³² Guru Tegh Bahadur was not a votary of these religious signs. Yet he staked his life to defend the rights of those who believed in them. For his great-act of sacrifice Guru Tegh Bahadur earned the epithet of *Hind Ki Chadar* (Protector of the people of Hind). Implicit in the protest of Guru was his concern to secure the people the right of freedom of belief and worship. It was a reiteration of the Sikh belief in an ethical social order and of the Sikh principles of tolerance and acceptance of diversity of faith and practice. At no time in the history of the human race, have men suffered so much to protect the faith of others as the Sikh Gurus.

Guru Tegh Bahadur was publicly beheaded under the order of Emperor Aurangzeb on 11th November, 1675 at Chandani Chowk, Delhi.³³ The event of martyrdom of the Guru initiated a process of moral and political awakening and changed the course of events in Punjab history. The Sikh reaction was very tense. Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom was the symbol of the rising Sikh reaction and resistance. Sikhism acquired a new consciousness of strength and self-confidence and entered into the final stage of its struggle.

Guru Gobind Singh, the successor of Guru Tegh Bahadur, seeing the trend of events, organised the community for armed resistance.³⁴ In fact, the ideological issue of the use of sword as a lawful device had already been clarified by Guru Hargobind when he conveyed to Sant Ramdas of Maharashtra that his sword was for

the protection of the weak and the destruction of the tyrant and that the same was in consonance with the thesis of Guru Nanak who had never given up the world. The Guru knew that he had a definite mission and duty to perform. Therefore, the policy of creating an organised institutional structure was proclaimed by Guru Gobind Singh. This development took its birth on the Baisakhi day, March 30 of A.D. 1699 (Julian Calendar) at Anandpur Sahib in the foothills of the Shivalik Himalayas. This memorable event is well known in the annals of Sikh history but not so the revolutionary ideas behind this action.

PURPOSE

Some of the historians and scholars engaged in Sikh studies have tried to present the purpose of the founding of the Order of the *Khalsa* in terms of the personal or political motives of Guru Gobind Singh, i.e. to avenge the death of his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, to fight against the Mughals, to mend the *Masands* and to reshuffle the Sikh organisation.³⁵ However, a significant clue to the founding of the *Khalsa* is found in the *Bachitar Natak*.³⁶ It is derived from the *Dasam Granth* that Guru Gobind Singh wanted to create a sense of self-respect and spiritual awakening among the people, suffering under the autocratic administrative oppression.³⁷ The Guru realised the 'Divine intervention' in human life and that God was the wielder of arms (*shastar*)³⁸ to punish tyrants and destroy the evil doers. The Guru as the instrument of God seeks His support.³⁹ The *Bachitar Natak* opens with an invocation to the 'Almighty' in an extraordinary manner.⁴⁰ It emphasizes the idea that God upholds good against evil.⁴¹ Indeed, the Guru expresses that he was ordained by God to spread *Dharma* among mankind and make it realize its duty towards God and society. He stresses that he had come to fulfill a specific 'Divine Purpose', with enmity and prejudice towards none.⁴² The Guru makes it explicitly clear that he was a human instrument of God for upholding the cause of righteousness against the tyrants, sinners and all evil doers.⁴³ He was not to be deemed as God or an *avtar* but a servant (*dasa*) sent by him for the sake of the *dharma*.⁴⁴ The Guru realised from his

situation that there was, in human nature, an instinctive urge for aggression and for crushing the weak. Therefore, self-respecting men, he felt, must organise and equip themselves against this persistent danger.⁴⁵ The Guru was a creative genius. He concluded that a man of faith and moral values must be in possession of arms to maintain his freedom and security, only then he could be fit to provide true leadership for upholding the right against wrong, for punishing the guilty, and for initiating a creative role in society.⁴⁶ Here two things should be kept in view. First is the loud protest by Guru Nanak against the tyranny of the invaders and the rulers. The protest was in the nature of a task he had set for the religious man and the Sikh society. Second is the amplification of the same point by Guru Hargobind when he talked to Sant Ramdas about the need of militarisation. Guru Gobind Singh thus believed that persons grounded in virtue, talent and dedicated to the service of God and humanity, should group themselves into the democratic Order of the *Khalsa*.⁴⁷ Therefore, his mission was essentially to raise a stable community of saint-soldiers (a *Panth*) that should at all times be willing to face and combat the enemies of righteousness. For this aim the Guru sought the support of the Almighty.⁴⁸

This idea of the nature of Guru Gobind Singh's mission is also presented by Sainapat a *darbari-kavi* (court poet) of Guru Gobind Singh. In his famous work *Gursobha* (1711 A.D.), Sainapat views the creation of the *Khalsa* as an epitome of the Sikh movement and the mission of the Gurus.⁴⁹ According to the poet, the *Khalsa* (the pure Sikhs of Guru Gobind Singh) were to defend the claims of conscience against any oppression and interference and to side with 'good' against 'evil'.⁵⁰ As the vanguard of righteousness, they were secure in their eternal foundation in the image of the Guru himself; they were not to remain concealed or to suffer diminution,⁵² This was the purpose and aim of the mission of Guru Gobind Singh, a conception which embodied the ideal norms towards which the entire Sikh historical process had been directed.⁵³

It is clear from the conceptual study of the *Khalsa* that the aims of the Sikh Gurus and Guru Gobind Singh were definitely and completely at variance with the fundamental religious aims of

Hinduism. The plan of the *Khalsa* envisaged bringing up a basic transformation in the social organisation of the people with a view to making it possible for them to become members of a universal culture and an egalitarian society which knew no ethnicity or regional limitation of origin or habitat.⁵⁴ The model for such a fraternity grounded in a universal culture, which represented a living synthesis of all the great cultures⁵⁵ of the world, was to be the *Khalsa*, a model for the future world society.⁵⁶

This idea of the kingdom of God and the brotherhood of man, was inherent in the Order of the *Khalsa*. It was the passionate conviction of the gurus that the principles of politics which govern the relations between the rulers and the citizens should be so revolutionised as to bring them in complete accordance with the principles of ethics.⁵⁷ Unless this principle is accepted and implemented, the emergence of a universal culture is not possible. The founding of the *Khalsa* was in fact the creation of a commonwealth (*sangha*) or a party in modern political parlance for the avowed purpose of facilitating the emergence of the global fraternity.⁵⁸ And it is in this context that the litany (*Ardas*), which is repeated in every Sikh congregation throughout the world, every morning and evening, to the effect that :

*Raj Karega Khalsa, aaki rahe na koi,
khawar hoi sabh milenge, bachei saran jo hoi.*⁵⁹

is to be understood and appreciated. In fact, the Order of the *Khalsa*, as divorced from political activity and not dedicated to the achievement of political ends, aiming at eventual establishment of a universal equalitarian global fraternity, has no intelligible connotation.⁶⁰ In the words of Bhai Nand Lal, a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh, 'the *Khalsa* has to fight to the end for justice and freedom'.⁶¹ Such was the purpose of the Guru in the creation of the *Khalsa*.

According to Sirdar Kapur Singh :

Guru Gobind Singh chose Baisakhi as the day for founding the order of the *Khalsa* deliberately, with some considerations in his mind, so as to usher in the dawn of a

new and regenerated society, which was to arise in accordance with the Phoenix principle, the principle of Resurrection.⁶²

The ceremony of the demand of human heads for the cause of *Dharma* and the subsequent presentation of the newly born Five Beloved Ones (*Panj Piaras*) to public assembly, could mean only some such dynamic, and symbolic connotation. It was this idea to which he gave expression by demanding the heads of living persons, and by taking them into the tent of inner sanctuary, where each individual was supposed to meet his God-in-death before he became qualified to lead and serve the world. Such are the 'Five Beloved Ones', who had thus met their Death by submerging their little egos into the Universal Spirit, and received the Baptism of the Steel. They had, thus, become qualified to rule and govern through service. It is in this background that Guru Gobind Singh identifies God with Death⁶³, and gives Him the epithet of 'All Steel'.⁶⁴

That this was in essence the idea, is not in doubt when we read certain poetical compositions of a contemporary poet, Bhai Gurdas Singh, the 2nd, who had a clear perception of the founding of the *Khalsa* and its implications.⁶⁵ The founding of the *Khalsa* marks the most significant stage in the social history of Sikhism in the century to follow. The programmatic nature of the *Khalsa* entailed a change in emphasis and transformation of the psychology of the Sikhs.⁶⁶ In his *Swayyas* Guru Gobind Singh makes public the divine secret, unknown to the *Vedas* and the *Quran* and the *Khalsa* is enjoined to forget about them.⁶⁷ As a social movement early Sikhism no doubt possessed some features in common with the religious brotherhood of the Radical Bhagats. If Sikhism, as a whole, nevertheless, broke free from the convoluted cycle of caste ideology that over look other protestant brotherhoods, to what cause did it owe its freedom? It is true that Sikhism barred the door of asceticism and so did not lose itself in the esoteric wilderness. But we have also to explain why it did not duly return, as so many others did, to the citadel of *Varnasharam Dharma*.⁶⁸ The answer to this question is found in the mode of the initiation ceremony, *Amrit* of the *Khanda de Pahul*⁶⁹ (baptism of the double edged sword) and

the structural significance of the set of articles of faith prescribed by Guru Gobind Singh at the creation of the *Khalsa*. The *Khande de Pahul* claimed to usher a new way of life, a distinct community of spiritual democracy⁷⁰, the membership of which was to be won by an initiation which demanded saintliness, heroism and selfless public service as well as individual moral excellence.

The most important concern of the mission of Guru Gobind Singh's *Khalsa* was a concrete programme of social integration of a separate casteless society. The *panj-piyaras* belonged to five different *jatis* as well as to different regions of the Indian subcontinent.⁷¹ These five beloved ones formed the first member of the Order of the *Khalsa* into which the Guru himself begged to be admitted, and was duly baptised and initiated as the sixth member of the *Khalsa*.⁷² Thus was created the Order of the *Khalsa*. Koer Singh in his *Gur Bilas Patshahi 10* (1751 A.D.) records the episode of the foundation of the *Khalsa* and the prescribing of the five K's with full details of the ceremony.⁷³

The Guru defined the qualifications of a 'pure member of the *Khalsa* in his well known *Swayyas*'.⁷⁴ This, in short, is what happened on the Baisakhi of March 30, 1699.

Persecution was one side of the coin of the Sikh exchange with contemporary wielders of power. The other side of the coin was divine intervention in history.⁷⁵ This is the proof of the legitimization of the use of sword against injustice and a tyrannical rule.⁷⁶ The *Khalsa* called forth aggression against evil. "Instead of cosmic sympathy, a partisan spirituality was demanded."⁷⁷ The *Khalsa* has been enjoined to forget the pluralistic thought of the *Vedas* and *Kateb (Quran)* and other religious texts, but to worship only the *Akal* (The Timeless).⁷⁸ Death with a sword has been equated with God.⁷⁹ The dictum of the Guru to the *Khalsa* is 'God destroys the enemies of the righteous and a religious dispensation can face any situation if it accepts God as Death'.⁸⁰

According to Ahmad Shah Batalia (*Tawarikh-i-Hind*) and Bute Shah (*Tawarikh-i-Punjab*) during the first few days after the Baisakhi of 1699, some eighty thousand men received the Baptism

of *khande de Pahul* to join the Order of the *Khalsa*.⁸¹ The authors of *Sri Gursobha* (Sainapat)⁸² (1711 A.D.) and *Gurpartap Suraj Granth* (Santokh Singh)⁸³ both recount the ordinance issued by the Tenth Guru, to congregations throughout India including the *sangats* of Assam, Ghazni and Kabul, to follow the injunctions and *rehat* of the *amrit*.⁸⁴ There is a clear record in the *Gursobha* that regarding the *Kakkar* of *Keshas* and the prohibition against shaving, there was a reaction in the Delhi *Sangat* of the Sikhs. This contemporary records prove both the event of baptism and prescription of *Kakkars*.⁸⁵

CONCLUSIONS

If we try to examine the institution of the *Khalsa* in all its aspects, the challenge of the socio-political milieu to Guru Gobind Singh, the perception of his mission and analogical significance of the symbolic structure of the five Sikh articles of faith, it becomes clearly evident that the emergence of the set of five K's cannot be segregated from the founding of the order of the *Khalsa* and it cannot be placed somewhere later in the eighteenth century as a legacy of the Jat culture as alleged by J.S. Grewal and W.H. McLeod. Mere conjecture is no ground for discarding a tradition of such a great importance particularly when all circumstantial and historical evidence is out to vouchsafe it. My conclusion is that the founding of the *Khalsa* and the prescribing of the five K's are synchronous products of the Baisakhi day of 1699, sanctified by Guru Gobind Singh by introducing the initiation of *khande de Pahul* at Anandpur Sahib on that day.

NOTE

The baptismal ceremony *Khanda de pahul* or *Amrit* is the most pious custom of the Sikhs. It is an act of bestowing the marks *Khalsa* Identity on the baptised person. This ceremony is held in highest esteem by the Sikh community. Recently an unfortunate and a serious conflict has been generated by Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, head of the Dera Sacha Sauda, Sirsa, Haryana through his blasphemous act of imitating Guru Gobind Singh's attire and

enacting the religious baptism ceremony of the Sikhs *Khanda de Pahul* to his followers at Salabatpura Village, District Sirsa, Haryana. The *dera* chief is a man of doubtful credentials. Three criminal cases involving murder of Ranjeet, member of management committee of Dera Sacha Sauda (July 10, 2002), sexual exploitation of women disciples of the *dera* (September 24, 2002) and murder of Sirsa based journalist, Ram Chander Chhatarpati (shot on October 24, 2002, died on November 22, 2002) are pending against Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh with the C.B.I.

The great Guru Gobind Singh is too exalted a holyman to be aped and mocked by anyone. The Sikh community took serious notice of the gross mistake committed by the *dera* chief. The Sikh psyche was deeply hurt by the unsavoury act of the *dera* chief. The provocation caused by the controversial advertisement inserted in various newspapers by the *dera* on May 18, 2007 depicting the *dera* chief conducting the initiation ceremony after the pattern of the creation of *Khalsa* by Guru Gobind Singh further intensified the conflict between the Sikhs and the *dera* followers to an ugly turn. There were mass protests, agitations, rallies, *bandhs* etc. which turned into serious open clashes between the Sikhs and the *dera* followers in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and various other places. The law and order situation was badly affected in Punjab and Haryana resulting in loss of life and property.

By and large, the Sikh organizations demanded to punish the *dera* chief for his act of denigrating the Sikh religious initiation ceremony. They want unconditional apology from the *dera* chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh to the Akal Takht, the highest representative authority of the Sikh community. An all religion delegation (*Sarv dharma sammelan*) under the leadership of Swami Agnivesh tried its best to solve the dispute amicably. On account of various pressures and interventions from various organizations, the *dera* chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh has so far issued three unsigned press notes / letters begging apology from Guru Gobind Singh and not the Akal Takht. On account of lack of sincerity on the part of *dera* chief, the matter is still hanging in doldrums. It is a matter of grave concern for maintaining the atmosphere of

harmony and peace in Punjab. Meanwhile, legal action has been taken against the *dera* Chief by the Punjab Government. The Punjab police had booked Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh under section 295-A of the Indian Penal Code on May 20, 2007. The *dera* chief had been charged with the offence of hurting religious sentiments of the Sikhs through his blasphemous act of imitating the baptism ceremony of the Sikhs. He is also allegedly involved in provoking violence in Punjab through his programmes of *nam charcha* (religious assemblies) in tense areas.

On June 20, 2007 the Chief Judicial Magistrate of Bhatinda issued arrest warrant against the *dera* head for allegedly denigrating Guru Gobind Singh by imitating his great historic act. Currently Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh is on bail and judgement against his crimes and offences are awaiting in the District Court Ambala and Punjab and Haryana High Court on account of delay in the submission of the investigation report of the C.B.I. Now, the C.B.I. has submitted its final report to the Punjab And Haryana High Court on August 1, 2007. The C.B.I. levelled charges on the *dera* Sacha Sauda chief, Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh in all three cases handed over to it by the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Notes and References:

1. See Khushwant Singh's 'Foreword' to *Perspectives on Sikh Tradition*. ed. Gurdev Singh, Academy of Sikh Religion and Culture, Patiala, 1986.
2. J.S. Grewal, 'The Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh' in *From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh* (Essays in Sikh History), pp. 59-60, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1972.
Note : Earlier, this thesis appeared in the form of an appendix in J.S. Grewal and S.S. Bal, *Guru Gobind Singh (A Biographical Study)*, Deptt. of History, Punjab University, Chandigarh, 1967, p. 188.
3. W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1975, p. 16.
4. Sainapat, *Sri Gursobha*, (ed. Shamsheer Singh Ashok), Sikh History Research Board, Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar, 1967, ch. 5, pp. 29-41.

5. Koer Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi-10*, (ed. Shamsheer Singh Ashok), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968, ch. 9, pp. 127-139.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.
7. (a) Sainapat, *Sri Gursobha*, pp. 21 and 32.
 (b) The code of discipline laid down for the *Khalsa* should be seen as supplementing not nullifying the instructions of the earlier *gurus*. See Madan Jit Kaur, 'Social Vision of Guru Nanak' in *Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1988, pp. 26-29. W.O. Cole remarks : "that the belief that the early gurus were consciously pacifist is open to question. The apparent contrast may owe more to change of conditions than to change of attitudes and to a current inclination to see Guru Nanak as a sixteenth century Gandhi".
The Sikhs : Their Religious Beliefs and Practices, Vikas Publishing House, Pvt. Ltd., Bombay, 1978, p. 128.
8. The five articles of faith of the Sikh called *Kakkars*, or five K's are *Kesh*, *Kangha*, *Kirpan*, *Kara* and *Kaechhera* (i.e. hair, comb, sword, steel bangle and short breeches from hips to knees).
9. R. N. Bellah, 'Religious Evolution' in *Sociology of Religion* (ed. Roland Robertson, Penguin Books, Reprint 1985, pp. 268-269).
10. See Jadunath Sarkar, *A Short History of Aurangzeb*, pp. 147-151.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 150
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 147-148.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
25. As quoted by Kapur Singh, *Paras'arapas'na* (The Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh), eds., Piar Singh and Madanjit Kaur, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1989, p.119.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *History of Punjab*, pp. 176-177.

28. "... until we can fully understand the developmental cycle of medieval mendicant orders we cannot place political phenomenon of the 'fighting jogis' of the sixteenth centuries, the contemporaneous militant struggles of Roshnaiya sect, the Satnami revolt of 1675 or plunder of Dhacca in 1763 by Sanyasis, etc., in their proper perspective. The analytical paradigm proposed must account under one and the same theory for cases or phases of political quietism as well as of political activism and conflict"—J.P. Singh Uberoi, 'The Five Symbols of Sikhism' in *Sikhism* (ed. L.M. Joshi), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1980, p. 143.
29. A *Sufi* Saint of Delhi, Sarmad was put to death under the order of Emperor Aurangzeb for cursing the Emperor and proclaiming the downfall of the Empire.
30. See S.R. Sharma, *Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, Oxford University Press, 1940.
31. Militarisation could not, by itself give the community as much strength as was needed to meet the mounting crisis. Internal unity was essential. The Sikh organisation was suffering from various lapses. Guru Gobind Singh's condemnation of the *masands* is well known. The system had to be ended. Drastic action was also needed against the dissenter groups i.e. the *Dhirmalias* (*Minas*) and *Ram Raiyas*. Again, there could be no real solidarity within the community until the social stratification of *varan* (*Jati*) could be completely eradicated.
32. Guru Gobind Singh recorded the martyrdom of his father's in his *Bachitar Natak* in the following words :
 ਤਿਲਕ ਜੰਝੂ ਰਾਖਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਤਾਕਾ ॥ ਕੀਨੋ ਬਝੋ ਕਲੂ ਮਹਿ ਸਾਕਾ ॥
 ਸਾਧਨਿ ਹੇਤਿ ਇਤੀ ਜਿਨਿ ਕਰੀ ॥ ਸੀਸੁ ਦੀਆ ਪਰੁ ਸੀ ਨ ਉਚਰੀ ॥
 ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਸਾਕਾ ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਆ ॥ ਸੀਸੁ ਦੀਆ ਪਰੁ ਸਿਰਹੁ ਨ ਦੀਆ ॥

 ਠੀਕਰਿ ਫੋਰਿ ਦਿਲੀਸਿ, ਸਿਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪੁਰ ਕੀਆ ਪਯਾਨ ॥
 ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਸੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਕਰੀ ਨ ਕਿਨਹੂੰ ਆਨ ॥
 ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਕੇ ਚਲਤ ਭਯੋ ਜਗਤ ਕੇ ਸੋਕ ॥
 ਹੇ ਹੇ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਭਯੋ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਸੁਰਲੋਕ ॥
 (Thus did the Master protect the frontal mark and the sacrificial thread of the Hindus :
 Thus did he bring about a great event in this dark age.
 He did so much for God's people.
 Giving up his life without uttering a groan.
 He suffered martyrdom for the sake of religion.
 Laying down his head without surrendering his principles.
 Breaking his potsherd on the head of the Delhi king,
 he departed to the city of God.
 Nobody ever did such a thing as he.)

'*Bachitar Natak*' Section 'Apani Katha', *Dasam Granth*, (ed.) Giani Mohinder Singh Rattan, Pub. Bhai Jawahar Singh and Kirpal Singh, Amritsar, Vol. 1, p. 54.

33. The place where the Guru was beheaded is called *Sis Ganj*, where a Gurdwara was raised by Sardar Baghal Singh Karorsinghia in 1750.
34. The continuous threat to the Guru's position for over a decade during his residence in the Hill region seems to have led to acceleration of the process of militarisation (which had taken roots in the Sikh organisation during the time of Guru Hargobind (A.D. 1595-1644), the Sixth Guru of the Sikhs, who had introduced the doctrine of *Miri* and *Piri*). The dire need of defence enhanced security arrangements. The Guru had been receiving arms, tents, elephants and horses as presents right from 1680. He was visited by princes and chiefs. He held *darbars* resembling a royal court and was called by his Sikhs as *Saccha Padsah*. We are also told that Aurangzeb wanted his *faujdars* on the north-west to see that Guru Gobind Singh stopped practices that created the impression that the Guru was a 'Raja'. The Guru had even recruited Pathans who had formerly fought in the Mughal army.
35. Gupta, H.R. in *Sikh Tradition*, Edited by Gurdev Singh, p. 172-74.
36. A composition of Guru Gobind Singh incorporated in the *Dasam Granth*. 'Bachitar Natak' was composed only a couple of years before the establishment of the institution of the *Khalsa*.
Dasam Granth, Vol. I, pp. 57-58.
37. The motive of Guru's decision was the struggle for independence. - W. Owen Cole, *Sikhism and its Indian Context—1469-1708*, First Edition, Pub. by D.K. Agencies Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, p. 266.
38. In '*Akal Ustat*', Guru Gobind Singh calls the Supreme Being 'All Steel'
ਸਰਬ ਲੋਹ ਦੀ ਰੱਛਿਆ ਹਮਨੈ ॥

Dasam Granth, Vol. I, p. 11

39. ਬਿਨਾ ਸ਼ਰਨ ਤਾਕੀ ਨਹੀ ਔਰ ਓਟੇ ॥
(Without God's support there is no refuge).
'Bachitar Natak', *Ibid.*, p. 54.
40. ਨਮਸਕਾਰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਖੜਗ ਕੇ ਕਰੋ ਸੁ ਹਿਤੁ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਇ ॥
(I bow to the Holy Sword, with love and devotion).
Ibid., p. 39.
41. ਧਰਮ ਚਲਾਵਨ ਸੋਤ ਉਬਾਰਨ ॥
ਦੁਸਟ ਸਭਨ ਕੋ ਮੂਲ ਉਪਾਰਨ ॥
Ibid., p. 57-58.
42. There is no denial of the validity of Islam or Hinduism in the writings of Guru Gobind Singh. The major theme in all his hymns pertains to the

unity of God, belief in one humanity and one religion (that of Truth):
ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਚਾਨਬੋ ॥

ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰੀਮ ਸੋਈ ਰਾਜਕ ਰਹੀਮ ਓਈ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਨ ਭੇਦ ਕੋਈ ਭੂਲ ਕ੍ਰਮ ਮਾਨਬੋ ॥
ਏਕ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ ਸਭਹੀ ਕੋ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਏਕ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੈ ਜੋਤ ਜਾਨਬੋ ॥
ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਮਸੀਤ ਸੋਈ ਪੂਜਾ ਐ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਓਈ ਮਾਨਸ ਸਭੈ ਏਕ ਪੈ ਅਨੇਕ ਕੋ ਕ੍ਰਮਾਉ ਹੈ ॥
ਦੇਵਤਾ ਅਦੇਵ ਜੱਛ ਗੰਧ ਤੁਰਕ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਨਯਾਰੇ ਨਯਾਰੇ ਦੇਸਨ ਕੇ ਭੇਸ ਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਉ ਹੈ ॥
ਏਕੈ ਨੈਨ ਏਕੈ ਕਾਨ ਏਕੈ ਦੇਹ ਏਕੈ ਬਾਨ ਖਾਕ ਬਾਦ ਆਤਸ਼ ਐ ਆਬ ਕੋ ਰਲਾਉ ਹੈ ॥
ਅਲਹ ਅਭੇਖ ਸੋਈ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਐ ਕੁਰਾਨ ਓਈ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਭੈ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਬਨਾਉ ਹੈ ॥

'Akal Ustat' *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I. p. 19.

43. ਹਮ ਇਹ ਕਾਜ ਜਗਤ ਮੇ ਆਏ ॥
ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਪਠਾਏ ॥
ਜਹਾਂ ਤਹਾਂ ਤੁਮ ਧਰਮ ਬਿਥਾਰੇ ॥
ਦੁਸਟ ਦੇਖੀਯਨਿ ਪਕਰਿ ਪਛਾਰੇ ॥

Ibid., p. 57.

44. ਜੇ ਹਮ ਕੋ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਉਚਰਿ ਹੈ ॥
ਤੇ ਸਭ ਨਰਕਿ ਕੁੰਡ ਮਹਿ ਪਰਿ ਹੈ ॥
ਮੇ ਕੋ ਦਾਸੁ ਤਵਨ ਕਾ ਜਾਨੋ ॥
ਯਾ ਮੈ ਭੇਦੁ ਨ ਰੰਚ ਪਛਾਨੋ ॥
ਮੈ ਹੋ ਪਰਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੋ ਦਾਸਾ ॥
ਦੇਖਨਿ ਆਯੋ ਜਗਤ ਤਮਾਸਾ ॥

Ibid.

45. Sukha Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*, Ch. 23, 15, 21.

46. Santokh Singh, *Gurpratap Suraj Granth*, Vol. XII, pp. 5046-5063

47. A comparative study of the ideology of Guru Gobind Singh with the thought of modern thinkers like William James, Thomas Carlyle, Fredrick Nietzsche and Oswald Sangler could be helpful.

48. ਠਾਢ ਭਯੋ ਮੈ ਜੋਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਬਚਨ ਕਹਾ ਸਿਰ ਨਯਾਇ ॥
ਪੰਥ ਚਲੈ ਤਬ ਜਗਤ ਮੈ ਜਬ ਤੁਮ ਕਰਹੁ ਸਹਾਇ ॥

'Bachitar Natak', *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I. p. 57.

49. ਮੈ ਅਪਨਾ ਸੁਤ ਤੋਹਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ॥
ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਚੁਰ ਕਰਬੇ ਕਹੂੰ ਸਾਜਾ ॥
ਜਾਹਿ ਤਹਾਂ ਤੈ ਧਰਮੁ ਚਲਾਇ ॥
ਕਬਧਿ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਲੋਕ ਹਟਾਇ ॥

Ibid.

50. ਦੇਹ ਸਿਵਾ ਬਰ ਮੋਹਿ ਇਹੈ ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮਨ ਤੇ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਨ ਟਰੋਂ ॥
ਨ ਡਰੋਂ ਅਰਿ ਸੋ ਜਬ ਜਾਇ ਲੁਰੋਂ ਨਿਸਚੈ ਕਰ ਆਪਨੀ ਜੀਤ ਕਰੋਂ ॥
ਅਰੁ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੋ ਆਪਨੇ ਹੀ ਮਨ ਕੋ ਇਹ ਲਾਲਚ ਹਉ ਗੁਨ ਤਉ ਉਚਰੋਂ ॥
ਜਬ ਆਵ ਕੀ ਅਉਧ ਨਿਦਾਨ ਬਨੈ ਅਤਿ ਹੀ ਰਨ ਮੈ ਤਬ ਜੂਝ ਮਰੋਂ ॥

'Markande Puran', Chandi Charitar, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 99.

51. The Guru wanted to convert his followers into members of a disciplined body having a distinct identity and sense of belonging.
52. J.S. : Grewal; 'The Earliest interpretation of Guru Gobind Singh's Mission' in *From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh* (Essays in Sikh History), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1982, pp. 78-81.
53. *Ibid.*
54. Hinduism is basically rested in and confined to the peninsula of India, the geographical unit of the ancient Hindu cosmology called Jamhudvipa, "Where alone dwell the descendants of Bharta" (*Vishnupurana*, 11., 3.1)
55. ਇਹ ਖਡਗ ਕੋਠੁ ਬੁਰਕਾ ਸੁਜਾਨ ॥
ਜੋ ਦਯੋ ਚਹਤ ਕਰੁਣਾ ਨਿਧਾਨ ॥
ਇਹ ਆਇ ਅੰਤ ਏਕੋ ਸੁਪਥੁ ॥
ਗੁਰ ਰਚਯੋ ਜਗਤ ਕੋ ਦੇਨ ਸਥ ॥
Sukha Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*, Anglo Sikh Press, Samvat 1965 (A.D. 1912), Lahore, p. 198.
56. ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਕੋਠੁ ਰਾਫਜੀ ਇਮਾਮ ਸਾਫੀ
ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਰਚਾਨਥੋ ॥
'Akal Ustat', *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 19.
57. Guru Gobind Singh's two letters of admonition called *Fatehnamah* and *Zafarnamah* which he despatched to Emperor Aurangzeb, after his eviction from the fortress of Anandpur, contain some of the clearest exposition of his ideas on this issue.
58. Kapur Singh, *Parasaraparasna* (eds.) Piar Singh and Madanjit Kaur), Guru Nanak Dev University, 1988, p. 40.
59. It means thereby that, the *Khalsa* shall become the supreme 'Decision-maker' in human affairs. And all effective opposition shall cease. Those in the opposition camp shall eventually come round to the right way after many frustrations, and progress can only thus be assured.
Tankhahnama Bhai Nand Lal, 62 in *Bhai Nand Lal Granthawali*, Ed. Ganda Singh, Malaka, Malaysia 1968, p. 199.
60. Kapur Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 40.
61. ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋ ਜੋ ਕਰੈ ਨਿਤ ਜੰਗ ॥
Tankhahnama Bhai Nand Lal, *op.cit.*, p. 54.
62. Kapur Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 44-45.
63. Guru Gobind Singh equates *Kal* (Death) with *Akal* (Timeless) :
ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਕੇ ਭੇਦ ਸਭੈ ਤਜਿ ਕੇਵਲ ਕਾਲ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨਿਧ ਮਾਨਯੋ ॥
'Swayya' 24, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 715.

To emphasise the partisan nature of God who destroys the enemies of the righteous the Guru said :

ਗਨੀਮੁਲ ਖਿਰਾਜ ਹੈ ॥

ਗਰੀਬੁਲ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਹੈ ॥

'Jaap', *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 8.

64. ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੀ ਰੱਛਾ ਹਮ ਨੈ ॥
ਸਰਬ ਲੋਹ ਕੀ ਰੱਛਿਆ ਹਮ ਨੈ ॥

'Akal Ustat', *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 11.

65. ਗੁਰਬਰ ਅਕਾਲ ਕੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਸਿਉ ਉਪਜਿਓ ਬਿਗਿਆਨਾ ।

ਤਬ ਸਹਿਜੇ ਰਚਿਓ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਾਬਤ ਮਰਦਾਨਾ ।

ਇਉਂ ਉਠੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਭਕਾਰਕੈ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਡਰਪਾਨਾ ।

ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਖਟ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰਾ ਫੁਨ ਮਿਟੀ ਕੁਰਾਨਾ ।

ਬਾਂਗ ਸਲਾਤ ਮਿਟਾਇ ਕਰਿ ਮਾਰੇ ਸੁਲਤਾਨਾ ।

ਮੀਰ ਪੀਰ ਸਭ ਛਪਿ ਗਏ ਮਜ੍ਹਬੋ ਉਲਟਾਨਾ ।

ਮਲਵਾਨੇ ਕਾਜੀ ਪੜਿ ਥਕੇ ਕੁਛੁ, ਮਰਮ ਨ ਜਾਨਾ ।

Bhai Gurdas (Singh), Var 41 in *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, eds. Giani Hazara Singh and Bhai Vir Singh, *Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 1965, pp. 667-68.

66. Surjit Hans, 'Ramavtar in *Dasamgranth*' in *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Vol. XI, No. I, 1984.

67. 'Swayya' 17, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 714.

68. J.P. Singh Uberoi, *op.cit.*, pp. 143-44.

69. It is believed that the *Khanda* with which Guru Gobind Singh stirred the baptismal water (*Amrit*) on March 30, 1699, is preserved at Anandpur Sahib.

70. The unambiguous claim made for the new order of the *Khalsa* by the Guru himself proclaims :

ਪਾਇ ਗਹੇ ਜਬ ਤੇ ਤੁਮਰੇ ਤਬ ਤੇ ਕੋਊ ਆਖ ਤਰੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਨਯੋ ॥

ਰਾਮ ਰਹੀਮ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਕੁਰਾਨ ਅਨੇਕ ਕਹੈ ਮਤ ਏਕ ਨ ਮਾਨਯੋ ॥

ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰ ਬੇਦ ਸਭੈ ਬਹੁ ਭੇਦ ਕਹੈ ਹਮ ਏਕ ਨ ਜਾਨਯੋ ॥

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਸਿਪਾਨ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਕਰਿ ਮੈ ਨ ਕਹਯੋ ਸਭ ਤੋਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਯੋ ॥

'Ramavtar', *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 254.

71. They were Daya Ram of Kashatriya caste of central Punjab (Lahore), Dharam Das, a Jat of Haryana, Mohkam Chand a washerman of Gujarat, (Dwarka), Himmat, a cook or *Jhivar* of Eastern India (Orissa of Jagan Nath Puri), and Sahib Chand, a barber or *nai* from Bidar (Karnataka).

72. Full details of this ceremony are given by Bute Shah *Twarikh-i-Hind* (Ahmad Shah Batalia), MS. A.H. 1233/A.D. 1818), its part *Zikr-i-Gurwan wa Ibtida-i-Singhan wa Mazhab-i-Eshan* is printed as an

Appendix to the first *Daftar* of Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Nawal Kishore Press, Lahore, 1885. According to Bute Shah, the Guru addressed the great gathering of his followers and said, among other things :

I wish you all to embrace one creed and follow one path, obliterating all difference of religion. Let the four Hindu castes, who have different rules laid down for them in the *Shastras*, abandon them altogether and, adopting the way of co-operation, mix freely with one another. Let no one deem himself superior to another. Do not follow the old scriptures. Let none pay heed to the Ganges and other places of pilgrimage which are considered holy in the Hindu religion, or adore the Hindu deities, such as Rama, Krishna, Brahma and Durga, but all should believe in Guru Nanak and his successors. Let men of the four castes receive my baptism, eat out of the same vessel, and feel no disgust or contempt for one another.

Tawarikh-i-Hind, pp. 405-406.

73. ਪਾਹੁਲ ਦੀ ਗੁਰ ਅਸਿ ਕੋ ਧਾਰੀ
ਦਰਸ ਵਿਸਾਖੀ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਸਾਰੀ ।

...
ਚਾਰ ਬਰਨ ਇਕਜਾ ਇਨ ਕੀਨੇ ।
ਕਰਦ ਵੇਰ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਕਹੁ ਦੀਨੇ ॥
ਆਦਿ ਗੁਰਨ ਕੀ ਗੀਤਿ ਸੁ ਟਾਰੀ ।
ਔਰ ਹੀ ਗੀਤਿ ਜਗਤ ਵਿਸਥਾਰੀ ॥

...
ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਸਕਲ ਮਤਿ ਤਯਾਗੇ ।
ਏਕ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਸ ਅਨੁਗਾਗੇ ॥

...
ਖੰਡੇ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਸਰਨੀ ਆਵੇ ।
ਯਮਨੀ ਸਭਾ ਸੁ ਮਾਰ ਗਵਾਵੇ ॥

Koer Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*, pp. 133, 136, 137.

74. ਜਾਗਤਿ ਜੋਤ ਜਪੈ ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸੁਰ ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਮਨ ਨੈਕ ਨ ਆਨੈ ॥
ਪੂਰਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਸਜੈ ਬ੍ਰਤ ਗੋਰ ਮੜੀ ਮਟ ਭੂਲ ਨ ਮਾਨੈ ॥
ਤੀਰਥ ਦਾਨ ਦਇਆ ਤਪ ਸੰਜਮ ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਨਹ ਏਕ ਪਛਾਨੈ ॥
ਪੂਰਨ ਜੋਤ ਜਗੈ ਘਟ ਮੈ ਤਬ ਖਾਲਸ ਤਾਹਿ ਨਖਾਲਸ ਜਾਨੈ ॥

(He who keeps alight the unquenchable torch of truth, and never swerves from the thought of, One God :

He who has full love and confidence in God and does not put his faith, even by mistakes, in fasting or the graves of Muslim saints, Hindu crematoriums, or Jogis, places of sepulchre :

He who recognises One God, and no pilgrimage; almsgiving

non-destruction of life, penances, or austerities; and in whose heart the light of the perfect one shines he is to be recognised a pure member of the *Khalsa*.

'Swayyas', *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 712.

75. 'Bachitar Natak', section 'Apani Katha', *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, pp. 57-58.

76. Guru Gobind Singh writes in his *Zafarnamah* (22.1), *Dasam Granth*, p. 1390.

Chun Kar Az, hamah hilate darguzasht,

Halal ast burden b-samashir dast.

77. Surjit Hans, *op.cit.*, p. 62.

78. ਬੇਦ ਕਤੋਬ ਕੇ ਭੇਦ ਸਭੈ ਤਜਿ ਕੇਵਲ ਕਾਲ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨਿਧ ਮਾਨਯੋ ॥

'Swayya' 24, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 254.

79. 'Ramavtar', *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 254.

80. ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਸਪਾਨ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਕਰਿ ਮੈ ਨ ਕਹਯੋ ਸਭ ਤਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਯੋ ॥

'Swayya' 10, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 715

81. See Sohan Lal Suri *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar I. p. 5 and Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 405-406 as quoted by Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, Orient Longman Ltd., Bombay, 1960, p. 69.

82. Sainapat, *Gursobha*, Ch. V, pp. 29-41.

83. *Suraj Parkash Granth*, Vol. XII, p. 5063.

84. Koer Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*, Ch. X, p. 140.

85. Sainapat, *Gursobha*, Ch. VII, pp. 42-47.

FIVE KAKKARS OF THE KHALSA

Marcea Eliade's religious phenomenology has centred many of the great symbolic expressions of the world religions. In the *Symbol, Rites and Rituals* Eliade stresses the importance of the historical context in which the symbol is at home. In order to have a better understanding of the five articles of faith of the Sikhs, we have to turn our attention to the sources in which these objects formed a set of Sikh symbolism, in the form of articles of faith. In restoring the five K's to the status of an instrument of knowledge, we have to rediscover the cognitive values of the Sikh articles of faith. A deeper understanding of the Sikh beliefs and values is particularly required to dwell upon the attitude that the late seventeenth century Sikh ethnography took up towards its symbols.

Perhaps the most important function of religious symbols, is the role they play in later-philosophical speculation in their capacity for expressing certain patterns of religious beliefs and Ultimate Reality that can be expressed in no other way. The symbol is capable of revealing a perspective in which diverse realities can be fitted together or even integrated into a system. In other words, a religious symbol allows man to discover a certain unity of the world and at the same time to become aware of his own destiny as an integrated part of the world. In case the five K's we have to find in what sense the different meanings of these symbols form a system in cosmological, anthropological and spiritual spheres.

It is difficult to imagine that the symbolism of the five K's could have been built up in its entirety by an act of reason. It requires quite another order of cognition to reveal its meaning. The capacity of religious symbolism to reveal a multitude of structurally united meaning has an important consequence. An essential characteristic of religious symbolism of Sikhism is its multivalence, its capacity to express simultaneously several meanings, the unity between which is not evident on the plane of immediate experience and beyond. Let me concede that their correspondence is indicated neither by immediate and spontaneous experience nor by critical reflection. It can be the result of a certain mode of viewing the world from the angle of Sikh doctrines. Deciphered in the light of real life, the five Sikh articles of faith point to a real world pattern. Since the world is a creation of God¹ and every living being has its own task, man too has a role to play.² To discover a world pattern of the five K's amounts to revealing a 'ciphered' meaning of the Divine work. Religious symbols which touch on the pattern of life reveal a deeper life, more mysterious than that grasped by everyday experience. They reveal an inexplicable side of life as well as the sacramental dimension of human existence. Thus, apart from observing the spiritual edicts of his faith as written in the holy book, *Guru Granth Sahib*, a true Sikh must at all times retain, undiluted and unaltered, the five symbols of his faith (called *Kakkars*).

The Sikh symbols are not sheer objects of life, they are the manifestation of the sacred and are charged with significant religious symbolism. The five K's are educative in the sense that they point to the process by which human moments become religious conditions and how biological and natural forces are overlaid with mystical and theological essence. These symbols have both a practical and a deep spiritual meaning for the Sikhs.

THE FIVE K'S

The order of the *Khalsa* from its very birth has claimed a distinct identity with a new way of life. All Sikhs on baptism should discard their caste and other surnames. The baptised Sikhs became 'Singhs' an appellation which symbolized the courage of the *Khalsa*

infallible insight knew the biological, psychological and metaphysical attributes of retaining the unshorn hair. Recently a detailed study of the vital energy of the human hair has been published by Dr. Gursharan Singh under the title *Keshas-God Test of Humans* (Pub. by S.G.P.C., Amritsar). It is a scientific fact that hair constitute a very significant and important living cell of our body. According to the Law of Nature, human being has been gifted with hair on his body with a purpose. Hair serve to drain our dirty matter from the body. The physiological function of the hair is to ingest and assimilate solar radiations. Hair is composed of Keratin, an important protein, which has got the special affinity for ultra violet rays of the sun. The solar radiation cause important photo-synthetic chemical development in the hair-cells. The secretion of the skin feeds the hair with the chemical of vitamin D which is recomposed in an assimilated form in the hair cells with the help of solar rays. Vitamin D is very important for the growth and strength of all tissues and organs of the body. When hair is subjected to cutting and shaving its replacing growth draws upon the resources of the body and leaves the strength of the body reduced. Guru Gobind Singh's reason for forbidding the shaving and cutting of hair is also grounded in metaphysical postulates of transcendental aesthetic which seek to show the human beings the path to self realisation, affinity with the cosmos and liberation from worldly bondage. It keeps the human being in deep harmony and cooperation with the generative impulses of the universe and the cultivation of a natural and integrated personality which transcends personal ego and accepts the cycle of growth, aging and decay as a fundamental religious discipline (*Hukam* or Will of God). This is the realisation of the ideological postulate of keeping unshorn hair. In Sikh faith, the keeping of the hair is regarded as an indicator of living in accordance with the way of nature. The shaving and cutting of the hair is considered as an interference with the natural law of the growth of hair. Therefore, keeping of the unshorn hair as a part of the Sikh code of conduct is life affirming, an indicator of the Sikh's commitment to social and worldly life in contrast to Hindu *sanyasis* and *jogis* who cut their hair, because they profess to the doctrine of renunciation, asceticism and negation from social responsibilities and household's life. On the other hand the *Khalsa*

was made to be a man of action in the battle ground of worldly existence and to fight for the defence of *dharma*, justice and protection of virtues. The *keshas* (unshorn hair) is the most important mark of the Sikh identity. The unshorn face and head are considered the insignia of the Sikh Gurus.

The uncut hair⁹ is one of the five articles of faith that every Sikh should wear on his person. That is why a baptised Sikh is called *Keshadhari*. The custom of wearing long and unshorn hair is among the most cherished and distinctive signs of the identity of a member of the *Khalsa Panth*. In *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* there are references to the concept of the cosmic men, a legacy of the pre-Aryan Jain doctrines (*Kunda Kundacharya*), later elaborated in the Vedic text of *Purusha Sukta*. This concept of ancient Indian cosmology has been adopted by the Sikhs with a new orientation.¹⁰ It is evident from *Bachitar Natak* that Guru Gobind Singh was familiar with the concept of the cosmic man.¹¹ The Sikh theology had evolved a theory of aesthetics which identified the idea of Beauty with the idea of the Holy.¹² Guru Gobind Singh affirmed this ideology and laid down the ordinance 'do not shave or shingle' as a testament of love of God.¹³ As a religious system, Sikhism is anti-ritualistic in its doctrinal concept and general tone. Therefore, its set of symbolic structure is also explicitly of anti-depilatory character.¹⁴ The precise physical state of hair, kept in the Sikh manner, is relevant to its symbolic meaning. In Sikhism the injunction to remain unshorn is expressly associated with the ceremony of initiation into the *Khalsa* Order and it is in this context that we have to explain its symbolic meaning.

The Sikh initiation ceremony of '*Amrit*' prescribed the obligation of keeping the hair unshorn. In terms of symbolic language and ritual idiom of the time, the most significant cultural meaning of the Sikh initiation ceremony was that it stood as the antithesis of the ceremony of Hindu renunciation.¹⁵ In contradiction to the *jogi* or the *sanyasi* practice of remaining naked with their hair shorn and bodies besmeared with ashes, the Sikh neophytes are made to come tidily clothed to the ceremony and wear, the five K's for life. It is true that *Keshas* were worn by *rishis* and *sanyasis* but

mostly in a matted i.e. *Jata* or unkempt state, frequently dressed in ashes.¹⁶ As against that a Sikh is ordered to be tidy in appearance, to wash his hair regularly and comb it twice a day. In the *Rehatnama* of Bhai Nand Lal, the command is explicit; 'a Sikh must comb his hair twice a day and tie his turban smoothly'.¹⁷

Emperor Aurangzeb had issued an edict (*firman*) that no Hindu in his kingdom can keep a beard. Similarly, Emperor Bahadur Shah also ordered all Hindus to shave their head's hair and beard so that they were not misunderstood as Sikhs.

Guru Gobind Singh taught his followers to show respect to their hair in accordance with their spiritual and physical attributes. The *Hukamnama* of Guru Gobind Singh addressed to the *Sangat* of Kabul reads as following (English translation) in context of his injunction for unshorn hairs :

The Sikhs should come to me wearing long hair. Once a man becomes a Sikh, he should never shave himself.

The *Rehatnamas* also corroborate these facts. In respect of unshorn hair, following are the commandments recorded in various *Rehatnamas* :

Bhai Chaupa Singh records :

The Guru's Sikh never gets himself shaved.

Ratan Singh Bhangu writes in his *Prachin Panth Prakash*:

Keep your hair with loving care. Never cut them with a blade.

Kesar Singh Chhibbar, author of *Bansavali Patshahi 10* narrates:

The Guru's Sikh never lets a barber touch his head or face. Only those who keep unshorn hair deserve to be called Guru's Panth.

Bhai Desa Singh accounts :

A Sikh is none but a mere sheep without arms and unshorn hair.

Sukha Singh, author of *Gurbilas Patshahi 10* reminds us of the strict commandment of Guru Gobind Singh :

My beloved ones. This is my commandment. Never show me your face without your sword and unshorn hairs.

The Britishers gave due respect to the significance and importance of the five *Kakkars* of the *Khalsa*. Special attention was paid to the Sikh *Rehat Maryada* for the Sikh soldiers recruited in the army. During the British rule it was compulsory by law to be Amritdhari for each and every Sikh *Fauji* (soldier). Whenever, any Sikh soldier was found showing dis-respect to any of the five *Kakkars*, specifically to *Keshas*, he was subject to court martial. This strict order of the British rule emphatically kept preserved the high moral and discipline in the Sikh army, who valiantly fought many battles for the British and earned name, fame and laurels for their bravery and gallant performance on the battle field.

Throughout the Sikh history, the anti-Sikh forces who wanted to subdue the Sikhs, knowing very well the importance of the *Keshas* in Sikhism always tried to attack the Sikhs from their *Keshas* so as to force them to surrender. It is a recorded fact of history that, before each and every Sikh martyr the following condition was laid down; 'either cut your hair or be ready to die'. But the Sikhs kept their tryst with death rather than to abjure their faith. As it is an essential article of Sikhism, the Sikh history is full of sacrifices which the Sikhs have made for the maintenance and protection of the unshorn hair. The names of Sikh martyrs like Bhai Taru Singh, Mati Das, Sati Das and several hundreds Sikhs who preferred death rather to get cut their hair cut by the fanatic Mughal and Afghan rulers stand testimony of their firm faith in keeping hair as an integral part of their faith. They represent the true spirit of the *Khalsa*. This is stressed in the daily prayer (*Ardas*) of the Sikhs:

Sikhi Kesaan Suwaasaan naal nibaahee

(Let my *Keshas*, breath and Sikhism go together)

Every Sikh seeks the boon of *Keshas* as gift of God in the *Ardas*.

Baba Ala Singh, of the Phulkian State of Patiala agreed to pay a heavy ransom of one lac rupees and a quarter to Ahmed Shah Abdali as punishment fee in preference to cutting down his *keshas* when he was arrested by the Afghan invaders.

KANGHA

The *Kangha* is explained in utilitarian terms, as a means to keep the hair neat and tidy since the Sikhs is also a soldier and a householder—not a mendicant or an ascetic. It is also seen as a symbol of the discipline of mind as expected from a Sikh. According to the Sikh custom, unshorn hair was invariably associated with the *Kangha* (comb), the second K's which performs the function of constraint on the hair and help impart them an orderly appearance.¹⁸ The comb is, therefore, partner of the *Keshas* with it the *Keshas* symbolised orderly spirituality.¹⁹ This meaning of their combination and their mutual association explains the full meaning of *Keshas* as distinct from the *Jata*.²⁰ The *Keshas* and *Kangha* with turban constitute a uniform which make the *Khalsa* an easily identifiable group.

KIRPAN

Every member of the *Khalsa* must always keep a *Kirpan* (sword) on his body, but this injunction refers to the *Kirpan* as a symbol²¹, and a defensive measure.

Kirpan is a traditional Indian symbol. It is an emblem of the ruling class (the *Kshatriyas*) and a weapon of war. It is also a symbol of self respect valour, strength and power to destroy ignorance and injustice.

The term *Kirpan* i.e. *Kripan* is from Sanskrit and it means power of knowledge to destroy *avidya* (ignorance) which separates the individual self from the abiding universal self. Therefore, *Kirpan* is symbolic of the transcendental knowledge, the *Brahmajnan* which destroys the illusion of the (temporality of the) world of 'Time and Space' and leads to eternal life.²²

The second meaning of *Kirpan* is related to the association of the sword with open combat, governed by ethical principles. It is not for treacherous and secret attack (because of its size). Therefore, it is implied in the symbolic meaning of the *Kirpan* that it stands for the *Khalsa* way of life which is governed by ethical principles, and it constitutes a self-dependent and useful citizenship of global fraternity and not a conformist and dependent social existence.²³

The third meaning of the symbol of *Kirpan* is that, it is a weapon of defence and hence it is the fundamental right of every free man to wear it openly. Since a member of the Order of the *Khalsa* is pledged not to accept any alien restrictions on his civic freedom, he is enjoined to resist and struggle for his unrestricted right to wear and possess such a weapon of defence.²⁴

This Sikh symbol of *Kirpan* has created a general impression that arms bearing and soldiering is the essence of Sikhism and that peace and (non-violence) are rejected by Sikhism as a way of life. This is a misleading notion. Violence as a way of life does not conform to the fundamental doctrines of Sikhism. The Sikh view of war and violence does not accept violence as the only means of solution to social and political conflicts. The sword in Sikh symbolism signifies dignity and self-respect, a readiness to fight but only in self-defence, or for the protection of the weak and oppressed. Guru Gobind Singh in his letter, *Zafarnamah* (letter of victory) to Emperor Aurangzeb (1706) declared recourse to violence and war as 'the last resort of a reasonable man for settling conflicts'.²⁵

The significance of the Sikh *Kirpan* can be derived from the saying of Guru Gobind Singh which preaches performance of physical annihilation of basic moral compromise for spiritual integrity.²⁶

The Sikh understanding of the law of survival does not accept surrender to violence. The Sikh insight is that those who surrender rather than resist, shall perish.²⁷

The metaphysical meaning of the *Kirpan* symbol as explained

by Guru Gobind Singh is available to us in his poetic composition, *Bachitar Natak*, where the Guru seeks protection from the steel sword, emblem of justice, authority and power.²⁸ The *Kirpan* is made out to be a symbol of royal authority and of freedom from oppression and servility. Its obvious meaning is stated to be of self-defence and individual freedom and self respect, embodied in the right to bear arms. The sword, it is believed cuts at the root of evil, worldly vices and attachments and destroys them utterly. The primary significance of the *Kirpan* is said to be of self-defence, with a word of caution that it is not an instrument of aggrandisement but self protection. *Kirpan*, the emblem of power and self-respect, has been given pre-eminence in the Sikh prayer, which begins with an invocation to the sword and then to the Guru (*Sri Bhaganti ji ki sahai*). Spiritually, it symbolizes the means for cutting through darkness and ignorance. Physically, Guru Gobind Singh made it a bulwark against forces of tyranny and injustice.

KARA

The *Kara* denotes the universality of a new religion. A Sikh must wear a *Kara* or an iron bracelet on his right wrist. The symbolic meaning of the *Kara* has been described variously by Sikhs scholars. According to J.P. Singh Uberoi, *Kirpan* and *Kara* constitute another pair of symbols, neither of which can be properly understood in isolation.²⁹ The Sikhs commonly say that *Kara* may have been a protection against bowstring. More likely, perhaps, it was a protection on the sword arm.³⁰ This interpretation is corroborated by the testimony of the hymns of the *Bachitar Natak* where *Kara* has been classified as a defensive device to protect against-*Kirpan*³¹. "The *Kara* imparts the same orderly control over the sword which the comb does over the hair. The *Kirpan*, in its conjoint meaning with *Kara*, is a sword ritually constrained and thus made into the mark of a citizen's honour, not only of a soldier's vocation."³²

Another meaning of the *Kara* is symbolic of the *Chakra* (circle). A circle is a perfect figure, all inclusive in its circumference and without a beginning, or an end. The *Chakra* is

of great cultural importance in Indian religious thought.³³ *Chakra* or wheel is an emblem of wholeness, perfection and divinity. It symbolises the complete unbroken circle, of life. The spiritual reality of life exists continually, free of both time and space and the *Kara* is an appropriate symbol of such eternal existence. The human soul, it is instructed must become as strong as the steel used in the *Kara* which has been tempered in the furnace. So a Sikh must aim to be God centred and view the whole creation with compassion. It reminds the Sikh of his unity with God and the *Khalsa* and, consequently, of vows and beliefs in *Nam*, *Guru* and *Sewa* (service) which should control his use of the *Kirpan*.³⁴ The *Kara* represents a Sikh's unbreakable link with his faith and brothers and sisters. The circular shape symbolizes the continuity of his existence and steel reminds him that he must be as strong under stress as the metal of his *Kara*:

It can be concluded from the above description that the *Chakra* symbol was adopted by the Sikhs for its rich cultural and martial traditions. In the Sikh symbology, the *Kara* represents a view of life that is positive and world-affirming, that cooperates with and aids the evolutionary impulse and purpose of the universe and does not seek, as the main concern of religion, ultimate annulment of human personality and final annihilation of the phenomenal world, as Jain and Buddhist systems, in particular, do.³⁵

KACCHA

The fifth article of faith which a member of the Order of the *Khalsa* is enjoined to wear, is a pair of short breeches to cover the genital organs and the thighs upto the knees. These breeches of tailored cloth, are called *Kaccha* or *Kacchehra*. The Guru prescribed wearing *kaccha* as a practical necessity and for a dignified personal habit. According to Sirdar Kapur Singh :

The injunction to wear this garment has three most profound symbolic meanings of far reaching significance. It is a badge and basis of civilization itself. The basic impulse of civilization is represented by the strictly etymological significance of the word, that is,

.....a self consciousness on the part of the human individual that he is a member of a group of fellow human beings, which is organised on the recognition of mutual duties. A duty implies self control, and covering of genital organs is the first and the basic act of one's self:³⁶.....Sikh wearing a *kaccha*, must remain mindful of this basic impulses, which is the matrix of ethics and civilization both, and conduct himself as a member of the society accordingly, realising that he is a responsible carrier of the mission of civilization, which is no less the product of performance of duties than of reflective and inventive genius, the cause of both which he must consciously strive to further."³⁷

According to J.P. Singh Uberoi, the *Kaccha* is to be understood as an agent of constraint like the *Kangha* and *Kara*, though the aspect of its control is not overtly stated.

Obviously it is a sartorial symbol signifying manly reserve in commitment to the procreative world as against renouncing it altogether.³⁸

The second symbolic meaning of the *Kaccha* is co-related to Indian doctrine of asceticism, which is the produce of the metaphysics of the Jain's originally, but has permeated the whole gamut of the Indian religious thought.³⁹ A necessary ingredient of this philosophy is living in nudity, in sky-clad state.⁴⁰

This *digambara* tradition is a complete and final repudiation of all social and human values, aiming at their destruction as a preliminary step towards the achievement of 'summum bonum'. The Sikh religion, on the other hand, postulates social organisation as the necessary context in which the Sikh way of life must be practised. It conceives of the 'summum bonum' as gradual enrichment and enlargement of human personality through a systematic cultivation of human values. It, therefore, rightly repudiates this ascetic ideal based on the Sankhya system of which *digambara* nudity is the primary characteristic. The wearing of the *Kaccha* is inductive of this repudiation.⁴¹

The third meaning of the *Kaccha* is to be traced to certain

fundamental concepts of the teachings of the *Vedas* and Brahmanism. The Vedic beliefs enjoin a number of rituals and sacrificial performances and *Yajna* rites. The practice of Vedic religion stands for the performance of prescribed sacrifices as laid down in the Vedic texts i.e. *Sruties*, *Samhitas* and *Brahmanas*. The *Kalpa* (a part of *Vedangas*) deals with the ceremonial part of the Brahmanic religion.⁴² The performance of sacrifices explained in *grihyasutras* and *dharamastras* publically or domestically, is obligatory on all those who follow Brahmanism or Vedic religion and non-compliance entails severest possible consequences, both on the temporal as well as the spiritual plane. These sacrifices require certain rituals and the assistance of a hereditary priestly class, the Brahmins. According to the *Kalpa* texts none of these sacrifices can be performed for and by a person, who has not previously undergone ceremonial purification, *shauch* and is not clad in a single, loose unstitched garment, *dhoti*. There are various other prerequisites but this single unstitched garment is the basic minimum.⁴³ In this context the discarding of *dhoti* and wearing of a *Kaccha* (or a stitched garment) at the time of initiation amounts to an abandonment of the practices of Brahmanism.⁴⁴ Instead, the new way of life based on ethical conduct in the social context inspired by universal compassion and love is to be adopted by the Sikhs.

When Guru Gobind Singh called upon the neighbouring Hindu hill-chiefs to join the order of the *Khalsa*, the serious objection they raised, was that they should be permitted to wear a *dhoti*, and the stitched *Kaccha* should not be prescribed in the discipline to be followed.⁴⁵ The Guru declared that the traditional rituals associated with the Vedic rites were meaningless and a matter of gross superstition. He enjoined upon the Sikhs to pursue ethical conduct inspired by love as the religious discipline in their lives.⁴⁶

According to Sirdar Kapur Singh :

These five—Sikh religious symbols emerged from the ancient roots of symbology and mythology of mankind, as a corollary of the epiphany of Sikhism and is the configuration of gestalt as ordained by Guru Gobind Singh.⁴⁷

The importance of *Kaccha* also has another level of significance. By providing the Sikhs with the shorts it was intended to symbolise the spiritual and mental breakaway from traditional dress (uniform) and thought. The Sikh mind was to be freed from the bonds of superstitions and people were thus to be released from immature and effeminate submissiveness.

The prescribing of the set of these five articles of faith by Guru Gobind Singh brought a new departure of Sikhism from the Hindu culture. It set out to annihilate the categorical partition, intellectual and social discrimination of the Brahmanic world. It rejected the fixed position imposed by Vedic *varnasharam dharma*. It dropped the opposition of the common citizen or householders versus the renouncer. All sorts of social and religious taboos making distinct modes of segregate existence, were denied to be acknowledged.⁴⁸ According to J.P. Singh Uberoi :

It acknowledged the powers of the three spheres of *rajya*, *sannyasa* and *grihastha*, but sought to invert their virtues conjointly in a single body of faith and conduct.⁴⁹

It is inferred from the above description that the social function of Sikh initiation rites of the five K's point to a definite connection between the five articles of faith of Sikhism and their religious nature.⁵⁰

CONCLUSION :

The entire set of five K's was thus forced to place religion in the structure of human situation itself. This symbolism was bound to produce a vigorous response. It indicated a search for a new direction. It established the belief that symbolization of man's relation to the ultimate condition of his existence is no longer the monopoly of any group explicitly labelled as religious.

The five K's are not mere signs of identification but are communicative symbols. They have got significant meanings. Here, the individual and society are seen as merged in a natural divine cosmos. Indeed, social conformity is at every point

reinforced with religious sanction. The symbolism of the five K's is a religious institution in which the Sikh religious values have been expressed. It presents the Sikh model of the relation between religion and society. Moreover it provided a distinct identity to the Sikh community and generated a vital force, a strong sense of belonging, solidarity, nationality and ethnicity to it. In fact by pronouncing the articles of faith for the *Khalsa* Guru Gobind Singh, shaped the cultural environment of the Sikhs and determined the guarantee of a distinct identity and its permanence in the course of history.

One of the most easily identifiable people in the world are the Sikh men, thanks largely to their turbaned heads and bearded visages. Why the Sikhs look this way is an issue frequently debated by other communities, but seldom fully comprehended. To a Sikh, however, the issue is crystal clear : his uncut hair and full beard and other articles of faith (*Kirpan, Kangha, Kaccha* and *Kara*) were ordained by the Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh, and are thus symbols of Sikh identity.⁵¹ Over the years, the Sikh community all over the world has withstood ignorance and intolerance of others, about their appearance, but has prevailed including in United States, U.K. and Canada. For instance, a Sikh in the U.S. army won the right to wear a turban in 1974, for another, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in 1976 exempted Sikhs from having to wear hard hats at construction sites. Now, a special type of helmet has been manufactured for the Sikhs. The Sikhs protest and fight for keeping articles of their faith because these are an integral part of the Sikh *Rehat Maryada* (code of conduct). In the words of Prof. Kartar Singh :

A little thought over the tenets and symbols ... will show that all of them had one object, namely, the welding of the different sections into a distinct nation, and eliminating the germs of future disruption. If these lessons had not been neglected afterwards but had been followed in the right good spirit, and steady progress had been made in the direction indicated by the Guru, most of the present day difficulties in the growth of the Indian nation would have never been there. Now, too, the sooner the Indians grasp the true significance of the reforms advocated and introduced by the

Sikh Gurus and further them with all their might, the better it will be for the future of the country.⁵²

Notes and References:

1. Guru Nanak Dev affirms :
ਇਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਸਚੈ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਕੋਠੜੀ ਸਚੈ ਕਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਵਾਸੁ ॥
Rag Asa, M1, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. p. 463.
 2. Guru Nanak said :
ਤੁਧੁ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਸਿਰੇ ਸਿਰਿ ਧੰਧੇ ਲਾਇਆ ॥
Ibid., p. 71.
 3. Sainapat, *Sri Gursobha*, pp. 31-32; Koer Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*, p.130. Also see Bhai Gurdas (Singh), 'Var' 41 in *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, p.667.
 4. Reference about these five symbols are invariably found in most of the early Sikh sources but the term *Kara* is not mentioned except in the *Dasam Granth* (pp. 112 and 704) and *Rehat Parkash* of Sumer Singh (*Guru Khalsa de Rehatname*, ed, Shamsheer Singh Ashok, p. 74).
Koer Singh's *Gurbilas Patshahi 10* is the first account to mention the name of the five 'K's' which are referred to, as; *Kaccha*, *Kesh*, *Kadag* (*Kirpan*) and *nam*. However, the poet stressed on the ideological combination of the militant potency (*sastra*) with the spiritual power of *Gurshabad* as the pre-requisite of the new discipline introduced by Guru Gobind Singh. The poet says :
ਸਸਤ੍ਰ ਮੈਲ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦ ਸੋ, ਕਛੁ ਕੈਸਨ ਸਦ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ॥
ਕਰਦ ਰਾਖਨੀ ਪੰਚ ਏ, ਤਜੈ ਨ ਕਬ ਹੀ ਨੇਮ ॥
.....
ਕੰਘਾਯੋ ਕਰੈ ਦੋਇ ਵਾਰੇ ਸੁਧਾਰੇ ॥
Ibid., p. 130.
- It is evident from the *Hukamnamas* of Guru Gobind Singh that wearing of arms was not only a *Rehat* (binding) for the Sikhs but they were also supposed to bring arms as gifts for the Guru. This injunction of the Guru to his *Khalsa* is implicitly ordained in many of his *Hukamnamas*.
ਸਿਖ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਬੰਨਿ ਕੇ ਹਜੂਰ ਆਵਨਾ ॥
Hukamnama, No. 60.
ਕਹਲੂਰ ਆਵਤੇ ਤਦਿ ਮੋ ਮੇਲੁ ਕਰਣਾ ਜਦਿ ਅਸੀ
ਕਹਲੂਰ ਆਵਤੇ ਤਦਿ ਸ੍ਰਬਤਿ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਬੰਨਕੈ
ਹਜੂਰਿ ਆਵਣਾ ਜੋ ਆਵੈਗਾ ਸੋ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ॥
Hukamnama, No. 63.

ਜਦ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਹਲੂਰ ਆਵਾ ਤਦ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਬੰਨ ਕੈ
ਹਜ਼ੂਰ ਆਵਣਾ ਅਵੈਗਾ ਸੋ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਹੈ ॥

Hukamnama, No. 64.

See, *Hukamname*, ed. Ganda Singh, pub. Punjabi University, Patiala, 1965, pp. 183, 187 and 189.

5. *Parasharprashna* (Baisakhi of the Khalsa), first published by Hind Press, Jullundhar, 1969. Revised Edition (eds. Piar Singh and Madanjit Kaur), Pub. Guru Nanak Dev University Press, Amritsar, 1989.
6. 'The Five Symbols of Sikhism' in *Sikhism* (ed. L.M. Joshi), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1980.
7. The significance of the five symbols of Sikhism becomes more clear if we examine them in view of the modern definition of religion which define religion as a set of symbolic forms and acts which relate man to the ultimate conditions of his existence—Bellah, *op.-cit.*, p. 263.
8. W. Owen Cole and Piara Singh Sambi, *The Sikhs : Their Religious Beliefs and Practice*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1978, p. 106.
- 8a. (a) See, J.S. Grewal, *From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Ch. 'The Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh', Pub. Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1982; W.H. McLeod. *The Evolution of the Khalsa*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1975, p. 16, See also H.S. Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*, Oxford, 1994.
9. "The cultural association of male hair, especially long hair, with magical or sacred idea is known from many parts of the world. It is well recognised in general terms to be a symbol of manliness, virility, honour, power, aggression and so on". We can locate many Greek and Hindu traditions, "we should, however, be careful to remember that like all sacred objects, long hair can also equally carry the opposite connotation. It can be regarded, especially when unkempt, as signifying something unclean, dangerous or abandoned. We must therefore, also refer to the actual context and situation in order to determine which of these two elements is pre-dominant in a particular case. The precise physical state of the hair is always relevant to its symbolic meaning but is never itself the deciding factor."

J.P. Singh Uberoi, *op.cit.*, p. 134.

10. In one of the hymns of Guru Nanak it is declared that the cosmic man, has beautiful nose and long uncut hair :
ਸੋਹਣੇ ਨਕ ਜਿਨ ਲੰਮਕੇ ਵਾਲਾ ॥

Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 567.

In an another hymn by Guru Arjan Dev it is said this Cosmic Man has unshaved, untrimmed body with a turban head :

11. ਸਾਬਤ ਸੂਰਤਿ ਦਸਤਾਰ ਸਿਰਾ ॥
Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1084.
 ਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਕੀ ਦੇਹਿ ਮੇ ਕੋਟਿਕ ਬਿਸਨ ਮਹੇਸ ॥
 'Krishnavtar' *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 182.
12. ਜੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡੇ ਸੋਈ ਪਿਛੇ ਜੋ ਖੋਜੈ ਸੋ ਪਾਵੈ ॥
 (Human body is a microcosm of the cosmos macrocosm).
 Trilochan, Dhanasari, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 695.
 ਰੂਪਵੰਤੁ ਹੋਦ ਨਾਹੀ ਮੋਹੇ ॥ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰਲ ਘਟ ਸੋਹੇ ॥
 Guru Arjan Dev, Gauri Sukhmani, M 5., *Ibid.*, p. 283.
13. ਜਟਾਜੂਟ ਰਹਬੇ ਅਨੁਰਾਗੁ ॥
Dasam Granth.
14. J.P. Singh Uberoi, *op.cit.*, p. 131.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
16. The *jatta* like the shaven head and pierced ears symbolizes the renunciation of social citizenship, *Kesha* and *Kangha* symbolize its orderly assumption, *Ibid.*, p. 140.
17. ਕੰਘਾ ਦੋਨੋ ਵਖਤਿ ਕਰ, ਪਾਗਿ ਜੋ ਨਿਤ ਚੁਨਿ ਬਾਧਈ ॥
 'Tankhanama Bhai Nand Lal' (8), in *Guru Khalsa de Rehatname* (ed. Shamsheer Singh Ashok), p. 53.
18. The possession of a comb in the head-hair has been made obligatory to forbid keeping the hair in a matted condition a practice of Indian ascetics and certain monastic orders. Kapur Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 141
19. Cole and Sambi, *op.cit.* p. 128.
20. J.P. Singh Uberoi, *op.cit.* p. 140.
21. The symbol of *kirpan* need not on every occasion assume the form of an actual long sword, but may also be a small steel miniature of the sword, kept tied to comb tucked up in the *jhuda* (head-hair). That is not to say that any outgroup authority may limit the possession of this symbol of this form.
 The common size of the *kirpan* worn by an *Amritdhari* Sikh is of 6 inches length. In the early twentieth century the British Government and later Government of India tried to prescribe a size of the *kirpan* symbol. Such gestures were strongly opposed by the Sikh community.
22. Guru Gobind Singh's exhortation to the *Khalsa* is :
 ਗਯਾਨਹਿ ਕੀ ਬਢਨੀ ਮਨਹੁ ਹਾਥ ਲੈ
 ਕਾਤਰਤਾ ਕੁਤਵਾਰ ਬੁਹਾਰੈ ॥
 (Take up the sword of true knowledge in hand and destroy the illusion and ignorance of the mind from the very roots).
 'Krishnavtar' *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I. p. 570.

The cosmic significance of the sword has been described by Guru Gobind Singh as following :

ਖੰਡਾ ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮੈ ਸਾਜਿ ਕੈ ਜਿਨ ਸਭ ਸੈਸਾਰੁ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥

Var Sri Bhagauti, *Ibid.*, p. 119.

23. Guru Gobind Singh hails :

ਧੰਨ ਜੀਓ ਤਿਹ ਕੋ ਜਗ ਮੈ ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਚਿਤ ਮੈ ਜੁਧ ਬਿਚਾਰੈ ॥

'Krishnavtar' *Ibid.*, Vol. I. p. 570.

Also see :

ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋ ਜੋ ਕਰੈ ਨਿਤ ਜੋਗ ॥

Tankhahnama Bhai Nand Lal 18, (Shamsher Singh Ashok), p. 54.

24. All Governments and rulers, whether ancient or modern have insisted and do insist on their right to control and curtail the right of a citizen to wear arms. It follows from this that the measure of freedom to possess and wear arms by an individual is the precise measure of his freedom and sovereignty. There have been a number of occasions in the History of Sikh community when State authorities have tried to put restrictions on wearing of the *kirpan* by the Sikhs, Such measures have been vehemently rejected by the Sikhs community.

(See *Karwaian Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee*, S.G.P.C., Records, Amritsar).

25. *Chu kar az hameh hilate darguzasht....., Zafarnama, Dasam Granth*, Vol. II, p. 1390.

26. ਜਬ ਆਵਕੀ ਅਉਧ ਨਿਦਾਨ ਬਨੈ ਅਤਿਹੀ ਰਨ ਮੈ ਤਬ ਜੂਝ ਮਰੋ ॥

(When the alternative is good or evil with choice between life and death. I choose death in fight with evil.)

Markanda Puran, 'Chandi Charitar', *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, pp. 99. Also p. 570.

27. ਖੜਗ ਹਾਥ ਜਿਨਿ ਤਜਹੁ ਖੜਗੁ ਧਾਰਾ ਸਹੋ ॥

(They who would loosen their grip on the hilt of the sword may have to receive the sharp edge of the sword on their soft boneless necks).

'Chritropakhyan' (297), *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 1247.

28. ਖਗ ਖੰਡ ਬਿਹੰਡੋ ਖਲ ਦਲ ਖੰਡੋ ਅਤਿ ਰਣ ਮੰਡੋ ਬਰਬੰਡੋ ॥

ਭੁਜ ਦੰਡ ਅਖੰਡੋ ਤੇਜ ਪ੍ਰਚੰਡੋ ਜੋਤਿ ਅਮੰਡੋ ਭਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਭੋ ॥

ਸੁਖ ਸੰਤਾ ਕਰਣੇ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਦਰਣੇ ਕਿਲਬਿਖ ਹਰਣੇ ਅਸ ਸਰਣੇ ॥

ਜੈ ਜੈ ਜਗ ਕਾਰਣ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟ ਉਬਾਰਣ ਮਮ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਰਣ ਜੈ ਤੇਗੋ ॥

Dasam Granth Vol. I, p. 39.

29. J.P. Singh Uberoi, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

30. Cole and Sambi, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-129.

31. ਕੜਾ ਕੜੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਣਯੋ ॥
ਜਟਾ ਜੁਟੀ ਜੁਆਣਯੋ ॥
ਸੁ ਬੀਰ ਜਾਗੜਦੇ ਜਗੋ ॥

'Chandi Charitar', Dasam Granth, p. 112.

Also :

ਕੜਾ ਕੁੱਟ ਸਸੜਾਸੜੁ ਬੱਜੇ ਅਪਾਰੇ ॥

'Rudaravtar' Parasnath Avtar ki katha, *Ibid.*, p. 704

32. J.P. Singh Uberoi, *op. cit.* p. 140.

33. The symbol of *chakra* was used in the religious rites of many ancient people all over the world. According to the testimony of the ancient Indian religious texts, *chakra* has a great significance and varied implication to wit, the *chakra* as the mundane (circle), as *mundi* (the axis or the centre), as a concentration of energy of the subtle body. The *chakra* has been mentioned in the *Rigveda* as symbol of the Sun. It is also symbolic of the *dharamchakra* (the Supreme Law) of Buddhism. It represents the *Kalachakra* (the recurrent cycle of time), the *Sudarshanchakra* (weapon of the Gods) etc. The *chakra* is also regarded as auspicious sign. The ceremonial wheel movement (*parikarma*) in a right direction around holy places, scriptures and relics etc. is considered lucky.

34. Cole and Sambi, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

35. Kapur Singh, *op. cit.* p. 114.

36. When Adam and Eve ate the fruit of wisdom, this was the first act they performed. This transformation marks the beginning of the metamorphosis that distinguishes the pre-troglodytic primitives the human beings of a civilized society.

Kapur Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

38. J.P. Singh Uberoi, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

39. Kapur Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

40. The ascetic religious Law taught by Vardhaman forbids clothes. *Uttardhyana Sutra*, 23.24; *Ibid.* p. 117.

41. *Ibid.* p. 117.

42. *Ibid.*

43. *Ibid.* p. 118.

44. *Ibid.* p. 119.

45. *Ibid.*

46. ਕੇਵਲ ਕਰਮ ਭਰਮ ਸੇ ਚੀਨਹੁ ਧਰਮ ਕਰਮ ਆਨੁਰਾਗੋ ॥

'Ramkali Patshahi 10' *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 710.

47. Kapur Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 120.
48. J.P. Singh Uberoi, *op.cit.*, p. 144
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.* p. 131.
51. The *Hukamnama* of Guru Gobind Singh addressed to the *Sangat* (congregation) of Kabul, Afghanistan dated Jeth 26, *Samvat* 1756 (1699 AD), explicitly points to the commandment of the Guru for the five *Kakkars*. The English translation of the edicts reads as following :

IK ONKAR SATGURU JI SAHAI

The Guru shall stand by the entire congregation (*Sarbat-Sangat*) of Kabul. We are mightily pleased with you. You should partake of *Amrit* prepared with a two edged sword i.e. *Khanda* from the five beloved ones. Keeping unshorn hair is our stamp (*Mohar*), upon you. Never be negligent about your shorts (*Kaccha*) and sword (*Kirpan*). Always wear a steel bangle (*Kara*). Wash and comb your hair both in the morning and evening. None should eat meat of animals slaughtered slowly as prescribed by the Islamic Law (*Halal*). Do not smoke tobacco. Do not keep company of one who keeps his hair unshorn and is a killer of female child. Do not keep the company of a *Masand* (who claims to be the Guru's agent and collects offerings and tithes); a heretic or follower of Ram Rai. Recite *gurbani* (Sikh scripture) and repeat the name of *Waheguru*. Follow the *rehat* (Sikh code of conduct) prescribed by the Guru. My blessing on the entire congregation.

—The Tenth Guru, Jeth 26, *Samvat* 1756 (AD 1699). Reproduced from Dr. Gursharan Singh's article 'Keshas—God's Test of Humans' published in *Guru Gobind Singh and Creation of Khalsa*, ed. Madanjit Kaur, Pub. Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2000, pp. 71-72.

52. Prof. Kartar Singh, *Life of Guru Gobind Singh*, pp. 136-37.

DURGA WORSHIP STORY : A CRITIQUE ALIGNED WITH THE CREATION OF THE KHALSA

The focus of this chapter is to make a critical study of Devi worship associated with the creation of the *Khalsa* by Guru Gobind Singh. The study proposes to trace out the various issues related to the origin, development and impact of the Devi story. How had it crept into the accounts related to the life of Guru Gobind Singh? Who were the authors who introduced this episode? What is its relevance to the fundamental beliefs of Sikhism? And, what is its effect on the status of Sikhism as an independent religion?

The *Khalsa* Brotherhood was created by Guru Gobind Singh in A.D. 1699. Its details in some Sikh chronicles, popularly known as *Gurbilases*, appear with an account of worship of Goddess Durga. The authors of these *Gurbilases* or chronicles seem to convey the idea that Guru Gobind Singh before creating the *Khalsa* Brotherhood, invoked Goddess Durga to bless him. Durga, we know, is a *Shakti* deity. In Hindu mythology she is known to be the Goddess of power who in times yore killed many demons and saved the innocent from their clutches. This tale of *Devi* worship has now been picked up by some scholars of Sikh studies to mar the image of Guru Gobind Singh on the creation of a new order. One of them, W.H. McLeod, observes in a very diplomatic language :

Shivalik hills have long been a stronghold of the Devi

of Shakti cult.....The result of prolonged residence within the Shivaliks was that elements of the hill culture eventually penetrated the Jat Sikh culture of the plains and produced yet another stage in the evolution of the Panth.¹

McLeod does not pronounce the elements of hill culture explicitly but is at pains to explain that :

In this (Guru Gobind Singh's) writing and in those which were produced at his court, we find constant reference to the mighty exploits of the Mother Goddess, one of the most notable being his own *Chandi di Vaar*.²

He then hastens to add another work *Chandi Charitra (Satsaya)* from *Markanda Puran* to the list and ends with the explication that as a result of "the fusion of these two cultures a new and powerful synthesis (took shape), one which prepared the Panth for a determinative role in the chaotic circumstances of the eighteenth century".³ What McLeod seems to hint at is that Guru Gobind Singh could bring forth good results only after he had invoked the help of Goddess Durga before the creation of the *Khalsa*.

McLeod, and some of our own scholars, who generally toe his line or, conversely, McLeod toes theirs, seem to hold that Guru Gobind Singh with a view to winning over the support of the hill people did actually undertake the worship of Durga before the creation of the *Khalsa*. This McLeod seems to suggest either because of expediency of the situation or because of Guru's faith in the might of the Devi. Both these reasons, on which these scholars seem to base their view, in a way, cast aspersions on the great Guru.

I, therefore propose to examine the authenticity of the *Devi* worship story. My approach shall be, first, to trace out the genesis of this story, and see when, how and with what motive, it got introduced in the account of the creation of the *Khalsa* and secondly, to see how far this is in consonance with the teachings of the Tenth Guru.

McLeod has, it seems, given undue importance to the works

Chandi di vaar and *Chandi Charitra* (Satsaya). It is naive on the part of this scholar to assume that these two works aimed at appeasing the sentiments of the hill people who were given to the worship of the Goddess. But this hypothesis does not hold good.

Guru Gobind Singh was a great patron of learning and had quite a large number of poets and scholars in his court enjoying his patronage. Some of these scholars, it appears, rendered a number of ancient classics into the native language *Desh Bhakha* prevalent at the time. In consequence, the story of *Ram*, *Mahabharat*, *Chankaya Rajaniti*, *Gobind Gita*, *Chandi di Vaar* and *Chandi Charitra* (Satsaya), etc. were, it seems, rendered into the native language. He had also kept a Persian scholar of the eminence of Bhai Nand Lal in his court who produced works such as *Zindagi Nama*, *Tausif-o-Sana*, *Ganj-Namah*, *Jot Bikas*, *Diwan-i-Goya* (Ghazaliat), *Arz-ul-alfaz*, *Khatima*, etc. The two works, *Chandi di Vaar* and *Chandi Charitra* (Satsaya) have been irrationally isolated from this whole mass of translated literature, nor, can they warrant any such conclusion as drawn by McLeod. In fact the motive for rendering *Chandi Charitra* in *Desh Bhakha* has been explicitly stated in the narration couched in new similies and metaphors to show the poet's style and art. Indeed, the translator has indicated therein his purpose :

Chandi Charitra has been rendered into Bhakha verse for the sole purpose of installing the sentiment of anger, courage and bravery. The entire personality of Chandi has been described in unique metaphors. This story of seven hundred verses has been completed by the poet to show the daring exploits of the Goddess.⁴

Thus, in this epilogue there is no hint of worship of *Devi* nor of asking any boon from her. Now if we turn to the prologue of this very work, the invocation is not to the *Devi* but to God, who is "Ocean of Compassion" (*Kripa Sindhu*), for helping him in rendering the story of *Chandika* in verses :

O Ocean of Compassion, Bless me, so that I render the story of *Chandika* in befitting language.⁵

This invocation shows the motive of the translator in rendering an ancient tale into the native tongue, and that motive is clearly not

to worship the Goddess, in any way. The same is the case with *Chandi di Vaar* which is the story portraying the victory of virtue over evil forces. Hence, as Dr. R.S. Jaggi has pointed out, translation of Hindu mythical literature by some poets, not all of whom were *Amritdhari* Sikhs or Singhs, cannot by any stretch suggest the Guru's faith in the *Devi* or *Avtaras*.⁶

Now we come to the genesis of the *Devi* worship story and its aggrandisement in Sikh literature.

The most important work in Sikh annals pertaining to the times of the Tenth Master is Sainapat's *Gursobha*.⁷ He happened to be one of the court poets of Guru Gobind Singh. This work gives a detailed and realistic account of the creation of the *Khalsa* on Baisakhi Day, in the year 1699.⁸ The important thing to note is that Sainapat does not mention the worship of Durga anywhere in his account. Had it been a part of the event, he would not have missed it, rather he would have flashed it conspicuously. This shows that there is no truth in the story of worship of the Goddess by Guru Gobind Singh.

McLeod, who concedes its importance as the earliest account of the baptismal event, *Khande de Pahul*, and of the fundamentals of the code of conduct for an initiated Sikh, however, contends that the date of this work does not stand confirmed. He observed that there are two dates A.D. 1711 and A.D. 1745,⁹ suggested about the production of *Gursobha*, and, if latter turns out to be correct, then it does not become a contemporary source detailing the baptismal account.¹⁰ The first date of the production of the *Gursobha* seems to have been borrowed from S. Hans, who in his *A Reconstruction of Sikh History from Sikh Literature*, holds A.D. 1711 to be the date of the compilation of *Gursobha*.¹¹ Hans has concluded this date from the analytical study of the dating of *Gursobha* published by Punjabi University, Patiala. Ganda Singh cites the evidence of Baba Sumer Singh who in his *Gurbilas Dasvin Patshahi ka* writes :

*Saina Singh kari Gur Sobha
satrah sat athh santhh nij Sobha.*¹²

Some mistake seems to have occurred somewhere in holding

the date to be A.D. 1711, for the Punjabi manuscript reads : *Samat satrah sai bhai brakh athhavan bit; bhadav sudi pandras bhai rachi katha kar prit*.¹³ This gives us 1758 B.K./A.D. 1701 as the date of this work. Some manuscript copies of *Gursobha*, it is alleged, have the word *athanav* (Ninety-eight) in place of *athavan* (Fifty/eight). Hence the discrepancy in the year which seems to worry McLeod. The year 1758 B.K./A.D. 1701 is correct and not 1798 B.K./A.D. 1741, because the manuscript itself gives the date 1701 A.D.

This is so because another work *Chanakya Rajaniti* rendered into the native tongue by this very poet, Sainapat, has come down to us. In this work (*Chanakaya Rajaniti*) it is stated :

*Guru Gobind ki Sabha main lekhak param sujan.
Chanakya Bhakha kari, kavi Sainapat man.*¹⁴

This shows that the author of *Gursobha* was actually associated with the writing during the days of Guru Gobind Singh.¹⁵ As such, a lapse of some forty years between the composition of the two works can in no case be justified. On the contrary it will be more appropriate to assume that the author undertook to write *Gursobha* soon after his first work, that is, during the period when he was still in the Guru's Court.

The second date relied upon by our friend, McLeod, thus, does not hold good, with the result that Sainapat's account about the creation of the *Khalsa* brotherhood becomes contemporary and authentic.

Sainapat's *Gursobha*, not only, furnishes the negative evidence of the complete absence of the story of *Devi* worship or *Hom*, but there is also a positive statement therein, indicating that the *Devi*, like other *Avtars*, only indulged in egoist self praises for her own worship and not that of God, the Creator.

Now about the accretion of the *Devi* worship story to the Baptismal account. The other two treatises which matter, are *Parchi Patshahi Daswin ki* by Sewa Singh Udasi (1798 B.K./A.D. 1741 and *Mahima Prakash (Vartak)* by Kirpa Dayal Singh (1798

B.K./A.D. 1741).¹⁶ Both of them do away with the event in a most cursory way :

Once the Guru called Pandas from Kashi,
Got the *Hom* done by them. Initiated the *Khalsa Panth*.¹⁷

The information given in both the works is identical. The word *Hom* seems to suggest some sort of ceremonial ritual in the nature of an initial ceremony and not at all the worship of goddess Durga. If it had been there, they would not have forgotten to mention it, particularly, when they give all sorts of other details.

Among the chronicles (*Gurbilases*) of the Guru, which come next, is one by Koer Singh captioned *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*. This gives the *Devi*-worship account but not without serious chronological mistakes. It says that the ritual to appease the *Devi* started in the year 1742 B.K. (A.D. 1685) and went on till 1746 B.K. for over three years.¹⁸ Now, during this period Guru Gobind Singh was actually at Paonta Sahib and not at Anandpur. The author forgetting all this makes the *Devi* appear atop Naina Hills. This is a serious chronological mistake.

After the above mentioned works that deal with the *Devi* episode, we have a plethora of writings dwelling on the event in great detail, namely; *Mahima Prakash* by Sarup Das Bhalla (1831 B.K. : 1774 A.D.) *Gurpratap Suriya Granth* by Bhai Santokh Singh (A.D. 1843) and so on. All these later writers, however, do not agree in their details of the *Devi* worship. They differ in respect of the motive behind the worship; in the identity of the *Hotra* (Brahmin Agent), in her effect on the Guru, in the Guru's service rendered to her, and in the gift given by the *Devi* to the Guru.

The problem of the *Devi* worship story in Sikh literature has been critically studied by Bhai Vir Singh in his *Devi Pujan Partial*.¹⁹ His study shows growth of the story according to the fancy of each writer. Yet the source of all these works is obvious. It is Koer Singh's *Gurbilas Patshahi 10* or else *Mahima Prakash* of Sarup Das Bhalla. We shall, therefore, dispense with these accounts and concentrate only on the first three, i.e. *Gursobha*, *Parchi Patshahi Dasvin ki* (Sewa Das) and Koer Singh's *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*.

The creation of the *Khalsa* was a very unique event in which a whole barrier of caste and status was demolished. Its effect on the privileged class of the Hindu society was bound to be negative. It appears that in the period intervening between Sainapat's *Gursobha* and Koer Singh's *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*, extending to some five or six decades, the Sikhs were engaged in a most fierce struggle against the State, when claiming to be Sikh or *Nanakpanthi* meant death. Hence, only Hindu outsiders were left, who, because of their Brahminical leanings, introduced the *Devi* in the *Khalsa* account in order partly to give credibility to their Hindu beliefs by attributing *Devi* worship to Guru Gobind Singh, and partly to disassociate themselves from Sikhism in the official eye, since being a Sikh meant sure destruction in that period. It is very significant that Sainapat's account which is the most authoritative and contemporary record, does not mention anything like *Hom* or *Devi* worship. But it has mentioned that on the point of shaving or *Bhadar*, many Sikhs in Delhi and elsewhere were reluctant to give up their old Hindu appearance and practices. This meant that they were not willing to declare themselves as *Khalsa* and run the risk of elimination. Here two facts are significant. In *Parchian Sewa Dass* and *Mahima Prakash Vartak*, it is the Hindu or Vedic practice of *Hom*, which is conducted through a Brahmin, that is mentioned as preceding the *Amrit* initiation of the *Khalsa*. In the subsequent narration, including that in the *Mahima Prakash*, it is the *Shaiva* practice of *Devi* worship that is mentioned. It only shows that the *Hom* story or the *Devi* worship is mere addition following the personal fancy of the writer according to his personal belief or preference for *Hom* or *Devi* worship. Second, in introducing the Hindu practice, the writer is not careful as to whether or not he is making a clear contradiction in his narrative. For example, Koer Singh at one place writes that the Guru wanted every person to be treated equally, but later concludes by suggesting that Brahmins should be given preferential treatment.

Another possibility is that the story was introduced on the analogy of the ancient tale of the birth of Agni-Kul Rajputs, who, it is stated, were born out of *Agni Kund*. Therefore, these Brahminically oriented writers created the *Devi's* story to show that

like the Rajputs of yore, the Sikhs were born to fight aggression and wrest power from the *Malechhas* or the Turks. Evidently, no follower of the Guru could have started the *Devi* story, when there was no mention of it in *Gursobha*. There was first a mention of a *havan* (*hom*) only in Sewadas Udasi's *Parchi Patshahi Dasvin Ki* and Kirpa Dayal's *Mahima Prakash* (*Vartak*). Later on, this story of a Vedic rite was converted into a full fledged story of *Devi* worship who bestowed a sword or a *Khanda* to Guru Gobind Singh. These Hindu oriented chroniclers made this conversion to serve a cause they held dear, i.e. the elimination of evil. They were in their own way trying to propagate the story that the divine forces were on the side of the *Khalsa* which, they confirmed had been created specifically to destroy the Mughal Rule. They thus had no inhibition in the propagation of stories which had no factual basis but which, they thought, would serve their cause.

Hence the coining of the story of *Devi* worship and its alignment with the creation of the *Khalsa*. The story needs to be reviewed in its real perspective. It has thus to be considered as only a figment of the imagination of writers who due to their background of Hindu mythology reveled in the creation of myths, and thought them to be very potent for the fulfillment of their prejudices or beliefs.

That Guru Gobind Singh did not stand in need for invoking the *Devi*, is clear from the fact that his Grandfather Guru Hargobind, had already employed the sword and had fought battles with the aggressive rulers.²⁰ Even Guru Gobind Singh before he created the *Khalsa*, had himself successfully fought a few battles at Nadaun and Bhangani to chastise the evil mongers.²¹ He, therefore, did not need any new sanction from any god or goddess to sanctify or legitimise his act of the creation of the *Khalsa*.

IDEOLOGICAL CONTRADICTION

The most vital point to be considered in this context should be the Sikh Guru's belief about God. They believed in only One Formless Supreme Lord whose concept has been made explicitly clear in *Mulmantra* and various hymns enshrined in *Sri Guru*

Granth Sahib (the Supreme Scripture of the Sikhs). The same unity of thought has been retained in the *bani* of Guru Gobind Singh. In the *Jap Sahib*²², *Akal Ustat*²³ and many other hymns, whenever the Guru seeks to perform some task, invariably, he invokes God, (the Timeless Supreme Reality, the Creator) and not *Devi*.²⁴ There are several passages in Guru Gobind Singh's writings in which he advocates only the worship of the Supreme Reality and none else.²⁵ Prof. Kartar Singh has rightly observed that Guru Gobind Singh's "writings make it absolutely clear that he was opposed to the worship of gods and goddess. Hence it is incredible that he should have acted against his cardinal principles and worshipped Durga."²⁶ Guru Gobind Singh was strictly an uncompromising monotheist, so he cannot be said to have worshipped the *Devi*, for this specific purpose.

CONCLUSION

Our discussion makes it very clear that Guru Gobind Singh had neither any need to invoke the *Devi*, nor had he at any time sought her help or blessings. *Devi* worship is ideologically in complete opposition and contradiction to the Sikh tradition both in the *Bani* of the *Guru Granth Sahib* and the accepted *Bani* of Guru Gobind Singh himself. From the historical point of view we find that the contemporary author of *Gursobha* who was the first to record story of *Amrit*, does not at all make any suggestion about *Hom* or *Devi*. In fact, Sainapat condemns the role of *Devi* as being an egoist. It is only a creation of the later Brahminically minded chroniclers, who just exhibited their *Puranic* bent of mind in introducing the *Hom* or *Devi* worship story. We, therefore, conclude that the story of *Devi* worship has to be rejected as a myth and as an unreality both on the basis of the historical and ideological evidence.

Notes and References:

1. W.H. McLeod, *Evolution of the Sikh Community*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1975, p. 133.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

4. ਚੰਡ ਚਰਿਤ੍ਰ ਕਵਿੱਤਨ ਮੈ ਬਰਨਿਓ ਸਭਹੀ ਰਸ ਰੁਦ੍ਰ ਮਈ ਹੈ ॥
ਏਕ ਤੇ ਏਕ ਰਸਾਲ ਭਇਓ ਨਖ ਤੇ ਸਿਖ ਲਉ ਉਪਮਾ ਸੁ ਨਈ ਹੈ ॥
ਕਉਤਕ ਹੋਤ ਕਰੀ ਕਵਿ ਨੇ ਸਤਿਸਯ ਕੀ ਕਥਾ ਇਹ ਪੂਰੀ ਭਈ ਹੈ ॥
ਜਾਹਿ ਨਮਿੱਤ ਪੜੈ ਸੁਨਿ ਹੈ ਨਰ ਸੋ ਨਿਸਚੈ ਕਰਿ ਤਾਹਿ ਦਈ ਹੈ ॥
Sri Dasam Granth Sahib Ji, p. 99.
5. ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਸਿੰਧ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਜੋ ਕਛੁ ਮੇ ਪਰਿ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਰਚੋ ਚੰਡਕਾ ਕੀ ਕਥਾ ਬਾਣੀ ਸੁਭ ਸਭ ਹੋਇ ॥
Ibid., p. 74
6. Shamsheer Singh Ashok (ed.) *Sri Gursobha* (Kavi Sainapat), Sikh History Research Board, Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Sri Amritsar, 1967.
7. *Ibid.*, Ch. 5, pp. 29-41.
8. The introduction of the *Khalsa* was a revolutionary change and it was not readily accepted by the followers of the Guru. There is a reference to the protest of Sikhs of Delhi (of the locality of Gilwali Gali) especially those of the Brahmin and Khauri castes who earlier reacted against the *Khalsa Rehat* of keeping unshorn hair. This account is recorded in *Gursobha* written by Sainapat who was an eyewitness to it. See also 'Guru Gobind Singh and the Sikhs of the *Khalsa*, reports from Bahadur Shah's Court, 1707-10, Tr. by Irfan Habib in *Sikh History From Persian Sources* (ed. by J.S. Grewal and Irfan Habib), Pub. Tulika, New Delhi, Indian History Congress 2001, p. 107 which quotes a Mughal report from *Akhbarat-i-darbar-i-Mu'alla*, dated 25 Rabi I.R.Y.U [24 May, 1710. Preserved at the Rajasthan State Archives. The extracts of the second report reads :
It was settled by him (Guru Gobind Singh) that the Sikhs of the *Khalsa* would not cut the hair of the head, moustaches and beard and would be known as Sikhs of the *Khalsa*. Among the community of *Khatri*s, a great disturbance occurred, and marriages and kinships [between the *Khalsa* Sikhs and others] were given up. First, at the village Chak, in Pargana Patti, which is known as Chak Guru, it came to a fight. The Sikhs of the *Khalsa* came out victorious.
(These reports are also printed in Ganda Singh's *Makhaz-i-Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*, Vol. I, Pub. Sikh History Society, Amritsar, 1949, pp. 82-85.
9. W.H. McLeod, *The Sikhs, History, Religion and Society*. Columbia University Press, New York, 1989, p. 63.
10. McLeod : "Its (*Gursobha*'s) potential significance is considerably diminished by the fact that its actual date has yet to be conclusively settled"—*Ibid.* See also McLeod's *Who is a Sikh : The Problem of Sikh Identity*. Clarendon Press, 1989, p. 35.
11. S. Hans, *A Reconstruction of Sikh History from Sikh Literature*; p. 246.

12. ਸੈਨਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਸੋਭਾ ।
ਸਤ੍ਰਹ ਸਤ ਅਠਸਠ ਨਿਜ ਓਭਾ ॥
See Ganda Singh (ed.), *Sri Gursobha* (Kavi Sainapat), Panjabi University Patiala, 1980. Introduction, p. 17.
13. ਸੈਮਤ ਸਤ੍ਰਹ ਸੈ ਭਏ ਬਰਖ ਅਠਾਵਨ ਬੀਤ ।
ਭਾਦਵ ਸੁਦ ਪੰਦ੍ਰਸ ਭਈ ਰਚੀ ਕਥਾ ਕਰਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ।
Sri Gursobha, Ch. I, p. 5.
14. ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਕੀ ਸਭਾ ਮੈ ਲੇਖਕ ਪਰਮ ਸੁਜਾਨ ॥
ਚਾਣਾਕੇ ਭਾਖਾ ਕਰੀ, ਕਵਿ ਸੈਨਾਪਤਿ ਮਾਨ ॥
Shamsher Singh, Ashok (ed.) *Sri Gursobha* (Kavi Sainapat), Introduction, p. I.
15. *Ibid.*, Ch. I.
16. Sewa Das, Bawa, *Parchi Patshahi Daswin Ki* (A.D. 1791) ed., Piara Singh Padam, Patiala, 1988, *Sakhi* 15, p. 60.
17. ਏਕ ਬੇਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੀ ਕਾਸ਼ੀ ਕੇ ਪਾਂਡੇ ਬੁਲਾਏ
ਤਿਨ ਸੋ ਹੋਮ ਕਰਾਇਆ, ਖਾਲਸੈ ਕਾ ਪੰਥ ਚਲਾਇਆ ॥
Mahima Prakash (Vartak), *Sakhi* I, as quoted by Bhai Vir Singh, *Devi Pujan Partal*, Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 1963, p. 55.
18. Koer Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi 10* (ed.) Shamsher Singh Ashok, p. 112.
19. See details of the Chart of the comparative study of contradictory statement of these authors given in Bhai Vir Singh's *Devi Pujan Partal*, Pub. by Bhai Vir Singh Sahitaya Sadan, New Delhi, 1985.
20. See Fauja Singh, 'Chronology of the Battles of Guru Hargobind' in *Proceedings Punjab History Conference*, Sixth Session, 1971.
21. See *Sri Dasam Granth Sahib Ji*, 'Bachitar Natak'.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. ਆਦਿ ਅਪਾਰ ਅਲੇਖ ਅਨੰਤ ਅਕਾਲ ਅਭੇਖ ਅਲੱਖ ਅਨਾਸਾ ॥
ਕੈ ਸ਼ਿਵ ਸ਼ਕਤਿ ਦਏ ਸੁਤਿ ਚਾਰ ਰਜੇ ਤਮ ਸੱਤ ਤਿਰੂ ਪੁਰ ਬਾਸਾ ॥
ਦਿਉਸ ਨਿਸਾ ਸਸਿ ਸੂਰ ਕੈ ਦੀਪ ਸੁ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟਿ ਰਚੀ ਪੰਚ ਤੱਤ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸਾ ॥
॥ਦੋਹਰਾ॥ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਸਿੰਧ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਜੋ ਕਛੁ ਮੋ ਪਰਿ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਰਚੋ ਚੰਡਕਾ ਕੀ ਕਥਾ ਬਾਣੀ ਸੁਭ ਸਭ ਹੋਇ ॥
Ibid., p. 74.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Prof. Kartar Singh, *Life of Guru Gobind Singh*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana. Fourth edition, 1998, p. 109.

THE GURUSHIP AND SUCCESSION OF SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB

This chapter aims to explore W.H. McLeod's thesis, put forward in his *Evolution of the Sikh Community*¹ whereby he rejects the tradition of vesting the authority of *Guruship* to the Holy Scripture, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* by the Tenth Guru, Gobind Singh. McLeod has supported his view on the authority of J.S. Grewal.² According to McLeod :

The tradition which conferred his (Guru Gobind Singh's) personal authority upon the sacred scripture and the corporate *Panth* may perhaps be a retrospective interpretation, a tradition which owes its origin not to an actual pronouncement of the Guru but to an insistent need for maintaining the *Panth*'s cohesion during the later period.³

McLeod asserts his conclusion in no less emphatic terms by suggesting that :

The slate must be wiped clean and must not be reinforced until we have ascertained just what did take place during the eighteenth century.⁴

McLeod's conjectures seek to cloud the historical interpretation of the events related to the religious history of the Sikhs. In fact, McLeod is primarily interested in the political history of the Sikhs

and the role played by the Jat community therein. In order to consolidate his so called Jat thesis, McLeod concentrates on the development of the events in the history of the Sikh community in the eighteenth century and tries to coordinate historical development with the motivation of the Jat leadership emerging out of political exigencies. However, he totally ignores the legacy and the heritage of the *Guru* period. It seems, McLeod is neither familiar with the social process of the evolution of Sikhism, nor of the nature of Sikh ethos. Besides, McLeod has not brought any historical evidence to substantiate his thesis for rejecting the succession of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* as declared by Guru Gobind Singh. On the other hand, I find solid evidence encompassed in the doctrine of *Guruship* as revealed in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, later reiterated by Guru Gobind Singh when he hailed the *Granth* as the *Guru*. Besides, it has also been authenticated by contemporary and near contemporary sources, documents and records that Guru Gobind Singh did not appoint any person to succeed him as *Guru* and that he had invested *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* with *Guruship* and had commanded the Sikhs to accept it as their *Guru*.

The theme of this chapter is in the form of a thesis that calls for an answer to the issues like the Sikh concept of the *Guru*, the doctrine of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* as visible body of the *Guru*, the closing of personal *Guruship* and the succession of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

THE GURU IN SIKHISM

The Tenth Guru Gobind Singh brought to an end the line of human *Gurus* by conferring *Guruship* upon the collection of hymns which his followers used in their personal and corporate devotion and as a guide. So a movement, whose focal point was a series of Masters, became centred upon a Holy Book, henceforth known by the name of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. This was the final culmination of the Sikh concept of *Guruship*, capable of resisting the temptation to deify the line of human *Gurus*. Yet this is not itself the whole of the story of Sikh *Guruship*.

The Sikh doctrine of *Guruship* is rooted in Indian religious tradition. But it is dynamic and distinct in form and structure. In fact, *Guruship* is a distinctive concept of Sikhism. It is a legacy of

the founder Master, Guru Nanak. The Tenth master while maintaining the concept of *Shabad* as *Guru* also made the *Panth* distinctive by introducing corporate *Guruship*.⁵ Though the concept of *Guruship* continued to be the core of Sikhism, the role of the human *gurus* was transferred to the *Guru Panth* and that of the revealed word to *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. This has made Sikhism a distinctive modern religion. Any other interpretation of the decision of Tenth Master to introduce the system of *Guru Granth* and *Guru Panth* would be contrary to the Sikh thesis as amplified by Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh.⁶

The meaning of *Guruship* in Sikhism is the manifest form which God takes as preceptor of mankind. The nature of *Guruship* in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* states that the supreme being is Himself the *Guru*, whose chosen channel for communication to humanity is the institution of the *Guru*. The Sikh *Gurus* have taken considerable pains to emphasize the point that the *bani* (the holy scripture) and not the body (the personal *guru*) is the *Guru*.⁷ Theologically, Guru Nanak had always made a distinction between himself, and the Lord as God's bard, conveying the message entrusted to him. The declaration, 'I spoke only when you, O God, inspired me to speak',⁸ is characteristic of his view of himself as God's messenger. There is no reason to believe that his successors differed from him in this view.⁹ It must always be remembered that the *Guru* of whom Guru Nanak spoke is God, self-manifested in order to reveal Himself, so that by His Grace man may reach the realm of Truth which is his destiny. The words 'Gur prasadi' in the *Mool Mantra* must be regarded as testimony to this belief.¹⁰ This statement is crucial to an understanding of the concept of *Guru*.¹¹

The testimony of God as *Guru* which began with Guru Nanak is reaffirmed by his successor *Gurus*.¹² However, to give this institution greater permanence and prevent future alterations, Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Guru of the Sikhs, refused to appoint any human successor and bade the Sikhs to consider the *Granth* as their *Guru*.¹³

Before his demise at Nanded in Deccan in A.D. 1708, Guru Gobind Singh, terminated human succession to the office of the

Guru and established instead, the condominium of the *Granth*, and the *Panth*, which ever since is recited at the conclusion of every congregational prayer, morning and evening, and on all occasions of public worship by the Sikhs :

The Order of the *Khalsa* was established as the command of the Timless (Almighty); This is now the commandment for all the Sikhs : Accept the *Granth* as the *Guru*; know *Guru Granth* as the visible body of the *Guru*. He who hath a properly trained mind, shall find confirmation thereof in the contents of the *Sabad* (the Holy Book) itself.¹⁴

Ever since, the Sikh community has recognised no human successor to *Guruship*, they consider *Khalsa Panth* and *Guru Granth* to be a twin institution, in whom rests the joint sovereignty of the Sikh world.¹⁵

Henceforth, the identity of the *Guru* has been incorporated in the doctrines of *Guru Granth* and the *Khalsa* was to provide leadership to the community (*Panth*), not in supersession of the previous *Gurus*, but as an authority to work in their names. It was invariably to guide itself by the teachings of the *Gurus* as found in the Holy *Granth*. For the Sikhs, this double aspect of *Guruship* solved the most serious problem of accepting authority of prophet as absolute and final for all times.

GURU GRANTH

Sri Guru Granth Sahib is deemed as the Visible Body of the *Guru* by the Sikhs. What is the meaning of the declaration that the *Granth* is the *Guru*?

The pronouncement of *Guru Gobind Singh* was not any new innovation in the Sikh doctrine. The seed idea of the doctrine of *Guru Granth* is clearly discernible in the *bani* of the *Granth* itself. It is repeatedly stressed in various hymns that :

The 'Revelation is the *Guru* and the *Guru* is Revelation', and that 'whosoever shall accept the Revelation of the *Guru* shall behold the *Guru* himself.'¹⁶

It is the injunction of the *Granth* that the Sikhs are bidden to 'accept the Revelation of *Guru* as true for ever, for, it is the Revelation of God that maketh the *Guru* to utter it'.¹⁷ Further, it is ordained that, 'the Revelation of the *Guru* is the Light of the World, through it God's Grace descendeth into human soul'.¹⁸ The message of the Holy *Granth* is that 'the *Guru*'s word abideth with soul as the water drowneth it not, and the fire consumeth it not'.¹⁹ Again it is stressed that as 'the *Guru*'s revelation pervadeth in the world, it redeemeth man through the Name of God.'²⁰

The direction in which the idea of Guruship evolved is implicit in the *bani* of the Sikh Gurus. According to Guru Nanak the *Guru* is one who had first realised the Lord and his Word.²¹ The Divine Message had to go to the world through the *Guru* for the emancipation of mankind.²² The true *Guru* must be the guide for conveying the Lord's message as given to him in the truest form.²³

According to Guru Amar Das :

There is *Guru*, through whom the True Word had come, ponder always on the True Word of the *Guru* for guidance in life.²⁴

After explaining the *Guru*'s Revelation, the Holy *Granth* identifies with the *Sabad* (or the Word of the *Guru*) that comes through human agency : the *Guru*. The term *Sabad* literally means the Word and was intended to represent God's Command :

The *Sabad* in the sense of eternal and self-existent sound, conceived as the eternal *Veda*, is an old Indian notion, rather an Ancient Aryan notion, for it is found in Zoroastrianism where the *Mentha Spenta*, the holy Word, is said to be the soul of God.²⁵

The *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* identifies *Sabad* with Divine Wisdom which forms itself as God's Light in the conscience of man. It avers that *Sabad* is the essence of things by understanding which man comprehends truth and thus becomes one with Truth.²⁶

The *Sabad* is dormant in the heart of every human being and it can be made manifest through the discipline of self-control and

spiritual orientation.²⁷ The mortal human body is not to be deemed as the *Guru*; it is the Light within, that is the *Guru*. It is the *Sabad* that is the *Guru* and the guide. The absence of it results in spiritual confusion.²⁸ This *Sabad* is not variegated, it is one, for God is One and all that there is, proceeds from God.²⁹ The search and discernment of this *Sabad* is an effort worth making for man in this world, all else is waste and weariness.³⁰

It was made clear by Guru Hargobind that the Immortal frame of the *Guru* had no peculiar entity and the *Sabad* as revealed by the *Guru*, is the only authentic portrait of the *Guru*.³¹ It is inferred from the above narration that Guru's revelation is recorded in *Sri Guru Granth* as *Sabad* or Testament. According to Sikh doctrine this testament is the *Guru*. The same principle was followed by Guru Gobind Singh when he established the condominium of the *Guru Panth* and the *Guru Granth*. Instead of appointing an individual successor to himself, he appointed the collective Order of the *Khalsa* and formally recognised the status of the *Granth*, which was to be conceded as the *Guru Granth*.³² This status of *Guru Granth* or *bani* had remained unaffected throughout³³, only the temporal direction of human affairs was given a collectively religious basis by Guru Gobind Singh.

This was the process by which the *Granth* has been institutionalised as the *Guru Granth*. The basic idea of the peculiar institution of *Guruship* of the Sikhs has remained unchanged. The *Granth*, stands for two things; revelation of Truth through the Word, and the interpretation and practice of the Truth through the personal lives of the *Gurus*. The truth as revealed in the *Sabad*, incorporates fundamental Truths, that is, belief in the Oneness of God and approach to him through the love of His *nam* and service (*Sewa*). As truth never gets old, so the *Guru* in Sikhism is never relegated to the past. He is ever new and whole.³⁴ He is ever alive in the collective personality of the Sikhs working with a sense of the presence of the *Guru* in them. That is why for the Sikhs, Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, does not belong to the sixteenth century, but is a dynamic personality guiding them personally through the organisation of the *Panth*. The initiation ceremony,

Amrit, the *Khande de Pahul* introduced by Guru Gobind, was made the basis of this reorganisation. It is evident from the above analysis that the doctrine laid down in the *Guru Granth* by the earlier Sikh Gurus³⁵, was reiterated by Guru Gobind Singh, when he hailed the *Granth* as the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

The *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* contains perennial philosophy, uncontaminated by temporal and secular considerations. It is not a code of ethical or social organisation like semitic scriptures, though it strictly postulates a social context for practice of religion and enjoins a strict ethical conduct. It is not sectarian, and lays down no metaphysical propositions in support of the practices of a religion. It has a universal import. It is the perceivable record of the Transcendental Wisdom. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is a divinity, not a deity, though extreme reverence is shown to it by the Sikhs. It is regarded as the visible body of the True *Guru* and is symbolic of the Sikh doctrine of sovereignty both temporal and spiritual.

It is on account of their (Sikhs) reverence for *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* that Sikhism has maintained its integrity despite observances resulting from popular piety and the fact that much of its time it has retained its separate religio-cultural entity in a society dominated by Hinduism.

If there is any way in which Sikhism may be described as unique, it is in its elevation of a holy book to the status of *Guruship*. Guru Gobind Singh's reason for elevating the *Adi Granth* to the status of *Guru* must be linked with his creation of the *Khalsa* in 1699. But the more immediate reason may probably be found in the awareness of the *Guru* that the circumstances of his time required some radical change in the mode of Sikh leadership. Politically and socially this took the form of the *Khalsa Panth* which was invested with the temporal authority (*miri*), and the spiritual authority (*piri*) remained with the *gurbani*, the scripture *Granth*.

Closing of Personal *Guruship* and the Succession of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*: The fact that Guru Gobind Singh, Tenth and the last *Guru* of the Sikhs, died at Nanded in Deccan, now in Maharashtra, on October 6-7, 1708, has been substantiated by contemporary and semi-contemporary sources. It has also been

authenticated beyond doubt that Guru Gobind Singh did not appoint any of his followers to succeed him as the *Guru* and that he had commanded his followers to look upon the Holy Scripture, the *Granth Sahib* as their *Guru*, thenceforth known as *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.³⁶ During his life time, Guru Gobind Singh had created the distinctive Order of the *Khalsa*, with uncommon form and the articles of faith and helped to impart them a distinct identity. Toward, the end of his life, the *Guru* had to face extremely, adverse circumstances. But he knew no despondency and did not give way to frustration. He had lost all his four sons, mother and a large number of devoted followers. He left Punjab and spent his last days in the Deccan.

At the creation of the *Khalsa* on the Baisakhi day of 1699, Guru Gobind Singh had not only presented himself to be formally initiated into the fraternity of the *Khalsa* but had also submitted himself to the discipline which had been prescribed by him for the new order of the *Khalsa*. This virtually meant the surrender of the office of *Guruship* to the will of the *Khalsa* and its merger into the body politic of the new order. This was re-affirmed by the message he delivered to his followers from his death bed. This fact is affirmed by the testimony of Sainapat, who was not only a contemporary of the *Guru* but was also one of his *darbari kavis* (court poets) at Anandpur Sahib.³⁷ His work *Gursobha*, composed in A.D. 1711, within three years of the *Guru*'s death, records :

A day before his death, the *Singhs* asked the *Guru* about the form he was adopting (or the person whom he was nominating to succeed him). In reply he said that the *Khalsa* was his very self and that to them he had granted his robe—his physical self, and that the Eternal and the Limitless Word uttered with the Lord's Light is the Supreme Master.³⁸

Sainapat, thus tells us that a day before the event the *Guru* had said that he had bestowed his physical form upon the *Khalsa*³⁹ and that the limitless and Eternal Word was *Satguru*.⁴⁰ This was *Guru Gobind Singh*'s last message and his final commandment saying in unmistakable language and clear words that he was not appointing

any particular individual as the succeeding *Guru* and that the *Khalsa* under the guidance of the Divine Word—the *Gurbani*—was to be the future physical and spiritual representative of the *Guru*. This has since become the accepted creed of the Sikhs.

The account of Sainapat is supported by Bhai Nand Lal, a devoted disciple, who was present at Nanded at the time of the *Guru's* death. He tells us in his *Rehatnama* that the *Guru* told him that his one form is the formless Supreme Spirit and the other *Granth Ji—Guru Sabda*, the Word of the great *Gurus* incorporated in the holy *Granth Sahib*. 'Have no doubt about it', he said, 'the visible form is the Sikhs, the *Khalsa* should remain absorbed in the *Gurbani* day and night'.⁴¹

Bhai Prahlad Singh, another associate of *Guru Gobind Singh* also corroborates the above mentioned *Guru's* commandment in his *Rehatnama* as following :

With the order of the Eternal Lord has been established
the *Panth*.

All the Sikhs are hereby commanded to obey the
Granth as the *Guru*.⁴²

Similarly Bhai Chaupa Singh, another associate of *Guru Gobind Singh*, had also mentioned this commandment in his *Rehatnama*.⁴³

It is evident from the above mentioned contemporary evidence that *Guru Gobind Singh* abolished for all time to come the nomination of any one person as the *Guru* of the Sikhs. After him the *Khalsa*, with *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* as their eternal *Guru*, became the *Guru Panth*. With this the personal line of *Guruship* came to an end. This historical fact has been rejected by McLeod. But there is abundant contemporary and near-contemporary evidence available for the comparative study of different versions of the events, for sifting fact from fiction and for authenticating the tradition recorded in the Sikh sources regarding the abolition of the personal *Guruship* and the succession of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* as the living *Guru* of the Sikhs.

Koer Singh, the author of *Gurbilas Patshahi 10* (composed in

A.D. 1751-1762) has not only supplied more details of this historical event, but has also provided clarity to the tradition. The author has accounted *Granth* as the *Guru Granth*⁴⁴ and reminds one of the *Guru's* commandment to the Sikhs to regard *Guru Granth* as Divinity.⁴⁵ He tells us in explicit terms that Guru Gobind Singh discontinued the line of personal *Guruship* and did not appoint anyone to succeed him as the *Guru*. In fact, he had surrendered his personality to the *Khalsa* when he had become one of them at the baptismal ceremony. He publicly declared this merger on many occasions afterwards, and especially a little before his death at Nanded. Koer Singh also narrates at length the formal installation of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* as the *Guru*.⁴⁶ The author records that the Guru addressed his Sikhs before his demise and instructed them that there would be no successor to him, the *Sarbat Sangat* and the *Khalsa* should deem *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* as Supreme. Koer Singh further states that with five paise and a coconut in his hand the Guru paid homage to the Holy *Granth* and declared its succession as the *Guru*.⁴⁷ Koer Singh had been in close association with Bhai Mani Singh who was a contemporary and a close associate of Guru Gobind Singh. Bhai Mani Singh was the first person to act as the *Granthi* (reader of Holy *Granth Sahib*) in the Harmandir Sahib at Amritsar after the Guru's death. Therefore, the information passed on from Bhai Mani Singh to Koer Singh is believed to be fully reliable.

Another work, which we may refer to here, is *Bansavalinama* of Kesar Singh Chhibbar (completed in A.D. 1779). Kesar Singh's ancestors had been in the service of Guru Gobind Singh as *dewans*. He claims to have seen and consulted in his early days a *behi* (account book) of the house of the Guru. The Tenth Chapter of *Bansavalinama* deals with the life of Guru Gobind Singh. In stanzas 678-83, the author mentions the demise of the Guru and his last commandment in reply to the question of the Sikhs as following :

"The *Granth* is the *guru*; you hold the garment (seek the protection) of the Timeless God".⁴⁸ Two hours later Guru went to heaven; his light blended with Light. The same night he was cremated after he had been bathed in rose water.⁴⁹

Further, the account of the demise of Guru Gobind Singh as given in *Mahima Parkash* by Sarup Dass Bhalla may be accepted as historical and objective. This account was completed in A.D. 1830KK/AD 1773. The author was a descendant of Guru Amar Das, the third Guru of the Sikhs. The account given in *Mahima Parkash* is objective and without any poetic embellishments and supernatural elements. Therefore, the evidence of this author can be accepted as historically correct. According to *Mahima Parkash*, before his demise, Guru Gobind Singh called his Sikhs to his presence and said :

Our ten forms have come to an end. Now recognize the Guru *Granth Sahib* in my place. He who wishes to talk to me should read the *Granth Sahib*. I have entrusted you to the lap of the Almighty⁵⁰.

Then follows the account of the departure of Guru Gobind Singh from this world. The author concludes the narration by recording that the Guru's body was then cremated and the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* was recognized in place of the Guru.

This simple account of the demise of the Guru and the succession of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* agrees in all its essentials with the contemporary and the later accounts.

Dr. Ganda Singh has referred to another reliable authority. Munshi Sant Singh's *Bayan-ki-Khandan-i-Nishan-Bedian* (account of the Bedi family of the Una). According to it when Guru Gobind Singh was about to pass away from this mortal world at *Nanded* in the Deccan (*Katik Sudi 5, 1765 Bikrami*), all the *Singhs* and disciples asked him as to who would be the future Guru. The *Guru* replied; '*Guru Khalsa, Khalsa Guru*'. Then the *Guru*, with five paise and a coconut in his hand, bowed before the *Guru Granth Sahib* and said, 'Ye all community should recognize the *Guru Granth Sahib* as the *Guru* after me and obey the commandments contained therein'. And then he uttered the following couplet :

Recognize the *Guru Granth* as the visible body of the *Guru*.

By this statement the author of *Bayan* has reiterated the last commandment of Guru Gobind Singh in the words of Bhai Nand Lal who was present at Nanded at the time of the Guru's departure for heavenly abode.⁵¹ The other details are identical to the tradition recorded in *Gurbilas Patshahi 10* by Koer Singh.

The tradition incorporated in the Sikh sources is also found in historical works in Persian and English. The Persian works are written both by Muslim and Hindu scholars belonging to Punjab or its neighbourhood. As most of them had first-hand knowledge of the tradition, beliefs, practices and ceremonies of the Sikhs, they cannot be ignored by students of history.

The news of the demise of Guru Gobind Singh has been mentioned in Royal Court News of the Mughals—*Akhbarat-i-darbar-i-Mu'alla* of October-November 1708 and the *Bahadur Shah Nama*.⁵²

Contemporary Persian accounts of Mirza Muhammad Harisi's-*Ibrat Namah* (1705-19 A.D.) and Sayyed Mohammad Qasim Hussain Lahauri's *Ibrat Nama* (1722 A.D.) and *Ibrat Maqal* (1731 A.D.) written within couple of years of the demise of Guru Gobind Singh, respectively record the usual account of Guru's death at Nanded.⁵³

Muhammad Ali Khan Ansari, the author of *Tarikh-i-Mazaffari* (1810 A.D.) and *Tarikh-i-Bahr-ul-Mawwaj*, narrates the history of the Mughals to the beginning of the reign of Akbar Shah II. These works deal extensively with the struggle of the Sikhs against the Mughals and the Afghans. They are considered to be important sources on the history of the Punjab during the eighteenth century. Before the end of Guru Gobind Singh's account, Muhammad Ali Khan writes that :

After him (Guru Gobind Singh), according to the faith of these people (the Sikhs), the descending of *Guruship* and of internal spiritual line came to end and the book, the *Granth*, was established in place of the Guru.⁵⁴

Besides, Ahmad bin Muhammad Ali's *Mirat-ul-Ahwal-Jahan Numa* (A.D. 1810) also mentions :

The sons of Guru Gobind Singh had been killed in the battle of Alamgir. After him there is no *Khalifah* (successor *guru*).⁵⁵

The conventional version is also supported by Hindu authors of Persian works. Rai Chatarman, the author of the *Chahar Gulshan Akhbar-un-Nawadir* (also known as the *Chahar Gulshan* or *Khulasat-un-Nawadir*) (compiled in A.D. 1759) writes in this context that :

There are Ten persons (to be recognized). These ten *Khalifahs* (*gurus*) are called *Das Mahal*. Anyone else sitting on the *gaddi* after them is not acceptable to them (the Sikhs).⁵⁶

Harsukh Rai, the author of *Maima-ul-Akhbar* (A.D. 1799) says about Guru Gobind Singh that :

He is the Tenth *Mahal* and is the last *Zahur* (successor) of Guru Nanak.⁵⁷

The traditional version accounted in Sikh and Persian sources is also incorporated in European accounts. George Forster has also referred to the Guru in his letter No. XI of 1783 in his *A Journey from Bengal to England* and says :

Govind died in 1708 at the town of Nanded without leaving any male issue and a tradition delivered to the Sicques, limiting their priests to the number of ten, inducing them to appoint no successors to Govind Singh.⁵⁸

Talking about the change in the inscription on the Sikh coinage, Major James Browne (1787-88) has casually referred to Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh as the first and the last Gurus of the Sikhs and has indirectly given us confirmation of the belief of the Sikhs.⁵⁹

Indian historians of the nineteenth century who compiled their accounts at the instance of Europeans are supposed to have recorded correct and reliable information because their purpose was to make the English rulers acquainted with the Sikhs with whom they (English) expected to come in close political contact in the future.

Khushwaqt Rai's *Tarikh-i-Sikhan*, also called the *Kitab-i-Tawarikh-i-Punjab* (written in A.D. 1811) says that Guru Gobind Singh passed away at Abchal Nagar, Nanded :

This event, that is his death, took place on Kartik Sudi 5, 1765 *Bikrami*. The generation (of *Gurus*) of Guru Nanak up to Guru Gobind Singh came to end.⁶⁰

Ahmad Shah Batalia, author of *Tawarikh-i-Hind : Bayan-i-Ahwal-i-Mulk-Hind wa-Maluk-i-an-az-Zaman-qadim-ta* (1233 Hijri) has devoted a part of his account to the Sikhs. The section *Zikar-i-Guruwan wa ibtida-i-Singhan wa Mazhab-i-eshan*, forms an appendix to *Daftar* I and II of the *Umdat-ut-Twarikh* by Munshi Sohan Lal Suri (the court historian of Maharaja Ranjit Singh). Ahmad Shah Batalia writes that Guru Gobind Singh, who had accompanied Emperor Bahadur Shah to the Deccan, died at Nanded in 1755 *Bikrami* (A.D. 1708) and this place was known as Abchal Nagar. Some Sikhs lived there. The Nizam of Hyderabad had fixed a daily allowance for them. Maharaja Ranjit Singh also made big donations for the upkeep of the sanctuary and the maintenance of its custodians.⁶¹

Sohan Lal Suri tells us that during the last moments of Guru Gobind Singh's life a disciple of his asked him to whom he had appointed as *Guru* after him. Thereupon the Guru replied that :

The *Guru* is *Granth Ji*. There is no difference between the *Granth* and the *Guru*. From the *darshna* of *Granth Ji* one shall have the happy *darshan* of the *Guru Sahib*.⁶²

This version is also confirmed by the Muslim historian of the nineteenth century. Ghulam Muhy-ud-Din alias Bute Shah in his *Tawarik-i-Punjab* (1848)⁶³ and Mufti-Ali-Din in his *Ibrat Namah* (1854)⁶⁴ have both recorded the demise of Guru Gobind Singh as an historical fact. Bute Shah in his abridged recension of the *Tawarik-i-Punjab* (preserved in the Punjab Public Library, Lahore) has followed Lala Sohan Lal's *Umdat-ul-Tawarikh* in recording the last commandment of the Guru regarding the *Granth* being the *Guru* after his death and that 'there is no difference between the *Guru* and the *Granth*'.⁶⁵

Kanhaiya Lal Hindi's *Zafar Namah-i-Ranjit Singh* is another study. He writes, Guru Gobind Singh died at Abchal Nagar in 1765 and that no one (of his disciples) succeeded him to the *gaddi* (*Guruship*). With him ended the *gaddi* of leadership (*masand-i-sarwari*) and with him came to end the custom of the succession of *Gurus* (*Shewa-i-rehbari*).⁶⁶

All the European historians of the nineteenth century like John Malcolm, W.G. Osborne, W.L. M'Gregor, Joseph David Cunningham and others who have written on the Sikhs have accepted the above version regarding the demise of Guru Gobind Singh, abolition of the personal *Guruship* and the succession of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* as the *Guru* of the Sikhs.

Even Ernest Trumpp, whose observations are very negative on various aspects of the religious literature of the Sikhs, has adopted this tradition. In this context, he writes that at the time of his demise, Guru Gobind Singh told his followers :

I have entrusted the whole society (of the disciples) to the Timeless. After me you shall everywhere mind the Book of the *Granth Sahib* as your *Guru*. Whatever you shall ask, it will show to you. Whosoever be my disciple, he shall consider the *Granth* as the form of the *Guru*. Having uttered these verses he closed his eyes and expired (A.D. 1708).⁶⁷

Muslim historians of the nineteenth century have also accepted this version. Syed Muhammed Latif, author of the *History of the Punjab* also records that some time before the death of Guru Gobind Singh when Sikhs asked him as to who would be the *Guru* after him, while breathing his last the *Guru* replied :

I entrust my *Khalsa* to the Divine Being... The *Granth* shall support you under all your trouble and adversities in this world, and a sure guide to you hereafter. The *Guru* shall dwell with the society of disciples, the *Khalsa*, and wherever there shall be five Sikhs gathered together, there shall the *Guru* be also present. The *Guru* also ordered them that: they must have belief in One God and look on the *Granth* as His inspired law...He then closed his eyes and began to pray, and expired in the performance of his devotion.⁶⁸

CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded from the above analytical study of the various historical sources at our disposal that :

- (i) The institution of *Guruship* of the Sikhs follows a planned process and a theological concept fundamental to Sikhism from the times of Guru Nanak.
- (ii) Guru Gobind Singh did not appoint any mortal successor to succeed him as *Guru*.
- (iii) The Tenth Guru had invested the *Guru Granth* with *Guruship*, and commanded the Sikhs to accept it as their future *Guru*.
- (iv) The closing of personal *Guruship* and the succession of *Guru Granth Sahib* was not an innovation, but only a reiteration of the doctrine of *Guruship* as revealed in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.
- (v) The announcement of the doctrine of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* as perpetual authority became the integral focus of the psyche of the Sikh community. The installation of the Holy Scripture as the *Guru* was a most significant development in the history of the Sikh community. The Sikhs were ordained to live their religion in response to the doctrines enshrined in the *Adi Granth (Sri Guru Granth Sahib)* and observe their faith accordingly. This pronouncement of Guru Gobind Singh shaped the intellectual and cultural environment of the Sikhs and determined the guarantee of the community's integration and permanence in the course of its history.

Notes and References:

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2. J.S. Grewal, *From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1982, Ch. XIV, pp. 100-105.
3. McLeod, *op.cit.*, p. 17.

4. McLeod, *op.cit.*, p. 16.
5. W. Owen Cole, *The Guru in Sikhism*, London, 1982, pp. 37-38.
6. Ganda Singh, pages 183 to 210 and Harbans Singh, pages 211-227 in *Perspectives on Sikh Tradition*, Edited by Gurdev Singh, Pub. Academy of Sikh Religion and Culture Patiala, 1986. See also Ganda Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh's Death at Nanded, An Examination of Succession Theories*, Pub. by Guru Nanak Foundation, Bhatinda District, Faridkot, 1972.
7. Taran Singh, 'The Nature of Guruship in the Guru Granth' in *the Nature of Guruship* (ed. Clarence O. McMullen), ISPCK, 1976, pp. 27-8.
8. ਤਾ ਮੈ ਕਹਿਆ ਕਹਣੁ ਜਾ ਤੁਝੈ ਕਹਾਇਆ ॥
Sri Guru Granth Sahib, pp. 566.
9. W. Owen Cole, *The Guru in Sikhism*, p. 55.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
11. There are explicit statements in the *bani* of Guru Nanak which indicate that God is the Guru. See *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1226.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 307, 308, 317.
13. See Part IV of this chapter.
14. ਆਗਿਆ ਭਈ ਅਕਾਲ ਕੀ ਤਬੈ ਚਲਾਯੋ ਪੰਥ ॥
 ਸਭ ਸਿੱਖਨ ਕੋ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨੀਉ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ॥
 ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਜੀ ਮਾਨੀਉ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰਾ ਕੀ ਦੇਹਿ ॥
 ਜਾ ਕਾ ਹਿਰਦਾ ਸੁਧ ਹੈ ਖੋਜ ਸਬਦ ਮੈ ਲੇਹੁ ॥
15. The *Guru Granth* is installed in the Sikh places of worship. It is symbolic of the visible body of the Guru. All the ceremonial paraphernalia associated with the keeping, opening and closing of the Holy Book represent manifestation of royalty and sovereignty, both temporal and spiritual.
16. ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਾਰੇ ॥
 ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਹੈ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜਨੁ ਮਾਨੈ ਪਰਤਪਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ ॥
Nat Asht padian, M4, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 982.
17. ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਤਿ ਸਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਣਹੁ
 ਗੁਰਸਿਖਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪਿ ਮੁਹਹੁ ਕਢਾਏ ॥
Gauri Ki var, M4 *Ibid.*, p. 308.
18. ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਇਸੁ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਕਰਮਿ ਵਸੈ ਮਨ ਆਏ ॥
Sri Rag, M5, *Ibid.*, p. 67.
19. ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਬਚਨੁ ਬਸੈ ਜੀਅ ਨਾਲੇ ॥
 ਜਲਿ ਨਹੀ ਛੁਬੈ ਤਸਕਰੁ ਨਹੀ ਲੇਵੈ ਭਾਹਿ ਨ ਸਾਕੈ ਜਾਲੇ ॥
Rag Dhanasari, M5, *Ibid.*, p. 679.
20. ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਰਤੀ ਜਗ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਇਸੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਪਾਇਦਾ ॥
Rag Maru, M3, *Ibid.* p. 1066.

21. ਗੁਰ ਮਹਿ ਆਪੁ ਸਮੇਏ ਸਬਦੁ ਵਰਤਾਇਆ ॥
Var Malar Ki, M1, Ibid. p. 1279.
22. ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਪੁ ਰਖਿਓਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਪਰਗਟੁ ਆਖਿ ਸੁਣਾਇਆ ॥
Rag Asa, Slok, M1, Ibid. p. 466.
23. ਜੈਸੀ ਮੈ ਆਵੈ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੈਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ ॥
Rag Tilang, M1, Ibid. p. 722.
24. ਇਕਾ ਬਾਣੀ ਇਕੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਇਕੋ ਸਬਦੁ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ॥
Rag Sorath, M3, Ibid. p. 646.
25. Kapur Singh, *Paras'arapras'na*, (Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh). Revised edition (eds. Piar Singh and Madanjit Kaur), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1989, p. 172.
26. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1353.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 8 and 1264.
28. ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰ ਪੀਰਾ ਗਹਿਰ ਗੰਭੀਰਾ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਬਦੈ ਜਗੁ ਬਧੁਰਾਨੋ ॥
Rag Sorath, M1, Ibid. p. 635.
29. ਏਕੋ ਸਬਦੁ ਏਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਵਰਤੈ ਸਭ ਏਕਸੁ ਤੇ ਉਤਪਤਿ ਚਲੈ ॥
Rag Prabhati, M3, Ibid. p. 1334.
30. ਇਸੁ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਕਰਣੀ ਹੈ ਸਾਰੁ ॥ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਬਦੈ ਹੋਰੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਗੁਥਾਰੁ ॥
Rag Prabhati Ashtpadian, M1, Ibid. p. 1342.
31. ਗੁਰ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੁ ਹੈ... ।
Bhai Gurdas, *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, eds. Bhai Vir Singh, Khalsa Samachar Amritsar, 1972, Var 24; 11, p. 296.
32. Kapur Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 177.
33. The Sikh tradition considers the Holy *Granth*, as the real corpus of the Transcendental Wisdom. And in this Sikh tradition follows the Buddhist principle of the identity of the Buddha's word with the essence of Buddha.
34. Teja Singh, *Sikhism, Its Ideals and Institutions*, Khalsa Brothers Amritsar, 1970, p. 26.
35. ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਜੇਵਡੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥
Gujari Ki Var, M3, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 515.
36. Ganda Singh, 'Guru Gobind Singh Designates Guru Granth Sahib to be the Guru' in *Perspective on the Sikh Tradition* (ed. Gurdev Singh) p. 183.
37. Sainapat, *Gursobha* (ed. Ganda Singh), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967, Ch. XVIII, 40-44, 85-89, pp. 128-129.
38. *Ibid.*
39. ਖਾਲਸ ਅਪਨੋ ਰੂਪ ਬਤਾਯੋ ॥ ਖਾਲਸ ਹੀ ਸੋ ਹੈ ਮਮ ਕਾਮਾ ॥
ਬਖਸ ਕਿਯੋ ਖਾਲਸ ਕੋ ਜਾਮਾ ॥
Gursobha, Ch. XVIII, 41. p. 170.

ਸੋ ਖਾਲਸ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਹਮਾਰਾ ।
ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਹਮਾਰਾ, ਅਪਰ ਅਪਾਰਾ,
ਸਬਦ ਬਿਚਾਰਾ ਅਜਰ ਜਰੇ ।

Ibid.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

41. ਸਬਦ ਪੜਨਾ ਸਬਦ ਸੁਣਨਾ ॥ ਸਬਦ ਕਮਾਵਣਾ ਸਬਦੇ ਬਾਝਰ ਨਾਹੀ ਬਾਉ ॥
ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਾਰੇ ॥
ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਕਰੈ ਸੇਵਕ ਜਨੁ ਮਾਨੈ, ਪ੍ਰਤਪਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ ॥

Bhai Nand Lal, 'Sakhi Rehat Patshahi 10, *Gur Khalsa de Rehatname*, ed. Shamsheer Singh Ashok, Sikh History Research Board, Amritsar, 1979, p. 51 (unpublished).

42. ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੇ ਬਚਨ ਸਿਉ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਚਲਾਇਉ ਪੰਥ ॥
ਸਭ ਸਿਖਨ ਕਉ ਹੁਕਮ ਯਹ, ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਿ ॥

Bhai Prahlad Singh, *Rehatnama Bhai Prahlad Singh Ka*, op.cit., p. 58.

43. *Ibid.*; p. I.

Bhai Nand Lal affirms :

ਜੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰ ਦਰਸਨ ਕੀ ਚਾਹਿ । ਦਰਸਨ ਕਰੇ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਜੀ ਆਹਿ ॥
ਮੇਰਾ ਰੂਪ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਜੀ ਜਾਣ । ਇਸ ਮੇਂ ਭੇਦ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੁਝ ਮਾਨ ॥

Bhai Nand Lal Granthavali, Rahitnama, Sri Guru Vach, p. 192.

44. ਦਿਜੈ ਦਾਨ ਭੂਖੇ, ਲਹੋ ਜਾਇ ਪਯਾਰੇ । ਦਿਵਾਨੰ ਲਗਾਵੈ, ਸੁਨੇ ਸਬਦ ਸਾਰੇ ॥
ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਜਾਨੇ ਸਦਾ ਅੰਗ ਸੰਗੇ । ਸੁਨੇ ਗਾਥ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਕੀ ਚੀਤ ਰੰਗੇ ॥
ਜਹਾਂ ਧਰਮਸਾਲਾ ਤਹਾਂ ਨੀਤ ਜੈਯੈ । ਗੁਰੂ ਦਰਸ ਕੀਜੈ ਮਹਾਂ ਸੂਖ ਪੈਯੈ ॥

Koer Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi 10* (ed. Shamsheer Singh Ashok), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968, Ch. IX, p. 130.

45. ਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਜੋ ਮੁਹ ਸਿਖ ਸੁਜਾਨਾ । ਮਾਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਭਗਵਾਨਾ ॥

Ibid., Ch. XXI, p. 283.

46. ਗੁਰਆਈ ਕਾ ਨਹਿ ਅਬ ਕਾਲ । ਤਿਲਕ ਨ ਦੇਵਹਿਗੋ ਕਿਸ ਭਾਲ ॥
ਸਰਬ ਸੁ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਖਾਲਸ ਮਾਨ । ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਸਿਕੇਤੁ ਗੋਦ ਮੈ ਜਾਨ ॥
ਲੜ ਪਕੜਾਇ ਸਬਦ ਕਾ ਰੂਪ । ਜੋ ਮਾਨੋ ਸੋ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਨੂਪ ॥
ਦਰਸਨ ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਹੈ ਸਵਧਾਨ । ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਮਾਨ ॥

Ibid., p. 284.

47. ਤਬ ਪੁਨਿ ਆਪ ਉਠੇ ਸਭ ਸੰਗਾ । ਪੈਸੇ ਪਾਂਚ ਨਲੀਏਰ ਸੁ ਅੰਗਾ ॥
ਲੈ ਕੇ ਤਾਹਿ ਅਰਪ ਕੀ ਬੰਦਨ । ਪ੍ਰਦੱਖਨ ਕਰਤੇ ਮਨ ਰੰਗਨ ॥
ਕਹਾ, ਜੋਇ ਬਚ ਕੀਨਾ ਚਾਹੇ । ਪਾਠ ਕਰੈ ਗੁਰ ਕੇ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਏ ॥
ਯਾ ਸਮ ਔਰ ਕੋਈ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਹੀ । ਬਿਨਾ ਕਾਨ ਸਚੁ ਬਾਕ ਭਨਾਹੀ ॥
ਯੱਦਪਿ ਰਾਜੈ ਕੈ ਹੋਇ ਪਾਸ । ਤਦਪਿ ਨ ਚਾਹੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਤਾਸ ॥

Ibid.

48. ਬਚਨੁ ਕੀਤਾ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਲੜ ਪਕੜੋ ਅਕਾਲ ॥
ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਖਾਲਸਾ, ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ॥
... ..
ਆਗਿਆ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਕਰਨੀ ਸਬਦ ਦੀ ਖੋਜਨਾ ॥
Kesar Singh Chhibbar, *Bansavali-nama Dasam Patshahi Ka* (ed. R.S. Jaggi) Pub. in *Parakh*, Research Bulletin of Punjabi Language and Literature, Punjab University, Chandigarh, Vol II, 1972, Ch. 10, Stanzas 679 and 680, p. 163-34.
49. *Ibid.*, Stanza 682, p. 164.
50. ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਦੀਨ ਦਿਆਲ ਬਚਨ ਕੀਤਾ ।
ਜੋ ਦਸ ਸਰੂਪ ਹਮਾਰੇ ਪੂਰਨ ਭਏ ।
ਅਬ ਮੇਰੀ ਜਾਹਗ ਗੁਰੂ ਗਿਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੋ ਜਾਨਨਾ ॥
Sarup Dass Bhalla, *Mahima Prakash*, Vol. II, Ch. 'Sakhian Patshahi Das, Sakhi 27, pp. 891-93.
51. Ganda Singh, *op.cit.*, in *Perspective on the Sikh Tradition*, pp. 198-199.
52. William Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Calcutta, 1992, Vol. I, p. 90, also Ganda Singh *op.cit.*, in *Perspective on the Sikh Tradition*, pp. 189.
53. Ganda Singh, *op.cit.*, in *Perspective on the Sikh Tradition*, pp. 200-201.
54. *Tarikh-i-Muzaffari*, p. 152, also *Bahrul-Mawwaj*, p. 208.
55. As quoted by Ganda Singh, *op.cit.*, pp. 201.
56. Rai Chatarman, *Chahar Gulshan Akhbar-un-Nawadar*, pp. 35-36 as quoted by Ganda Singh, *op.cit.*, in *Perspective on the Sikh Tradition*, pp. 201.
57. Har Sukh Rai, *Maima-ul-Akhbar*, p. 481 as quoted by Ganda Singh, *op.cit.*, in *Perspective on the Sikh Tradition*, pp. 201.
58. George Forster, *A Journey From Bengal to England*, London 1798, Vol. I, p. 263.
59. James Browne, *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks* (India tracts), London, 1788, pp. VI, VIII.
60. Khushwaqt Rai, *Tarikh-i-Sikhan*, (MS, 1869 BK), pp. 366, 379.
61. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Tawarikh-i-Hind*, (MS, 1233 AH), Appendix p.11.
62. *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Arya Press, Lahore, 1885, Vol. 1, pp. 64-65.
63. See Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, (MS, A.D. 1848), Vol. 1, p. 206.
64. See Ali-ud-Din, *Ibrat Namah*, (MS, A.D. 1845), Vol. 1, p. 178.
65. Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, (Abridged recension), p. 62.
66. Kanhaiya Lal Hindi, *Zafar Namah-i-Ranjit Singh*, Lahore, 1876, p. 52.
67. Ernest Trumpp, *The Adi Granth*, (Eng. Tr.), London, 1877, pp. XC vi.
68. Syad Muhammed Latif, *History of the Punjab*, Calcutta, 1891, p. 269.

INSTITUTION OF PANJ PIARAS: ITS POTENTIAL AND SIGNIFICANCE IN THE SIKH COMMUNITY

Introduced on the foundation day of the *Khalsa*, the Baisakhi of the year 1699, at Anandpur Sahib, by Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth *guru* of the Sikhs, the *Panj Piaras* is a familiar entity of the Sikh society. After bestowing *Amrit* (nectar) to the five tried Sikhs (Bhai Daya Singh and Bhai Mohkam Singh, Bhai Sahib Singh, Bhai Dharam Singh and Bhai Himmat Singh) and granting them the title of *Panj Piaras* (Five Beloveds), Guru Gobind Singh himself took *Amrit* from the newly initiated *Khalsa*.¹ The Tenth Master established their spiritual and temporal authority in matters of the Sikh community, by further declaring, "Henceforth, the *Khalsa* is the *Guru*, and the *Guru* is the *Khalsa*. There is no difference between you and me."² By this declaration. Guru Gobind Singh invested the Sikh community with the dignity of equality and fraternity, and inaugurated a new custom for initiation into the Sikh faith.³

The newly initiated *Khalsa*, the *Panj Piaras*, were destined to play a significant role in the history of the Sikh community. These *Panj Piaras* have been immortalized in the daily prayer, *Ardas*, of the Sikhs, in which they have been placed immediately after the holy names of the ten Masters (*Dasan Patshahian*).⁴ Before his

demise, Guru Gobind Singh bestowed the succession of guruship on *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*⁵, and designated the leadership of the Sikh Panth to the *Khalsa*, represented by the *Panj Piaras*.⁶ The institution of the *Panj Piaras* is a wonderful legacy of Guru Gobind Singh. It played a significant role in the development of the history of the Sikh community and the socio-political ideology of Sikhism.

The history of the origin and development of the *Panj Piaras* is evidence of the fact that the Sikh concept of the *Panj Piaras* is an original one, and that it has not been borrowed from any other religious or political system. It is true that the ideas of *Panch Panchayat* and *Panch mein Parmeshwar* are well rooted in the ancient Indian political system⁷, but the connotation, working and implication of the Sikh institution of *Panj Piaras* are distinct. It is not a prototype or imitation of the Hindu polity. In its concept and application, the Sikh institution of *Panj Piaras* is unique and unparalleled in the history of world civilization. It is definitely a product of the Sikh ideology, deeply grounded in the democratic traditions as propagated and practised by the Sikh *gurus*. In fact, the institution of *Panj Piaras* is a part and parcel of the Sikh practices.

The term *Panch* has been mentioned at various places in the devotional compositions compiled in *Guru Granth Sahib*. In *Japuji* Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, has emphasized the significance of the supremacy and validity of the tradition associated with the Indian concept of *Panch* both in temporal and spiritual spheres.⁸ The equivalent of the term *Panch* in the Panjabi language is *Panj* (meaning five). By adding the word *Piara* (beloved) as a suffix to the term *Panj*, Guru Gobind Singh made it clear, that he was defining the authority of a new collective body of those Sikhs who are dear to him and that he has bestowed on them the special honour and status similar to the one reserved for the Guru himself.⁹

In the Sikh scripture and early Sikh literature, the fundamental democratic belief of Sikh ideology regarding the concept of the holy assembly of the five (*Panj*) occurs repeatedly, i.e., that one disciple is a single Sikh, two form a holy association (*sadh sangat*),

but an assembly of five represent the spirit and blessings of the God Himself.¹⁰ By forming the collective body of the *Panj Piaras*, Guru Gobind Singh perfected the tradition of the holy assembly of the five in the Sikh *sangat* (congregation), and provided it with a complete and concrete shape, a new name, a new status and new role. It is to be noted that through this innovation, Guru Gobind Singh infused the democratic spirit at grassroot level among the Sikhs, and generated a revolutionary change in the political attitude of the Indian masses. The Guru was the forerunner of the theory of a classless society and sovereignty of the people. The *Panj Piaras* belonged to different castes, but Guru Gobind Singh merged them into one casteless society—the Brotherhood of the *Khalsa* with a distinct identity and symbols (the five *kakars* i.e., *kesh*, *kangha*, *kara*, *kirpan* and *kachhehra*) as articles of faith and a mark of uniform. Armed like soldiers, the Sikhs could easily be recognised from a distance. With a distinct identity and commitment to social reform, the infrastructure of an egalitarian society was raised, in which justice was to be administered on the basis of equality. Further, by taking *amrit* from the *Panj Piaras*, Guru Gobind Singh gave the final touch to the basic trait of the Sikh doctrine of sovereignty. The order of the *Khalsa* was a logical consummation of the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev, which attach high significance to the individual as well as the collective society.¹¹ In fact, by founding the *Khalsa*, Guru Gobind Singh rejected the theory of the divine right of kings, and advocated the modern democratic principle that the real sovereignty lies with the people. The introduction of the institution of *Panj Piaras* established some fundamental equations in the social structure of the Sikh community.

Right from its inception, great importance was attached to the authority of the *Panj Piaras*. Guru Gobind Singh readily submitted before the collective decision of the *Panj Piaras* directing him to leave the fort of Chamkaur in the larger interests of the Sikh *Panth*, although he was not personally in favour of evacuating the fort. But, the Guru wanted to set an example by which the status of the *Panj Piaras* could be raised so that no Sikh could dare to defy their orders. This was further reinforced when Guru Gobind Singh

willingly paid a fine imposed by the *Panj Piaras* for saluting with his arrow in front of the grave of Muslim Fakir Dadu.¹²

Panj Piaras are always given prominence on all Sikh ceremonial occasions and functions of religious as well as political importance. The most important religious ceremony of the Sikhs is *amrit sanchar* (initiation ceremony). It can be performed only by the *Panj Piaras*. The *amrit* is prepared by the *Panj Piaras* with a *khanda* (double-edged sword) and recitation of prescribed *Gurbani* for the occasion, in the presence of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. The *Panj Piaras* have the authority to punish a defaulting Sikh and to rebaptise the *tankhaiyas* (the defaulter). Things are finalised in the decision making assemblies (*sarbat Khalsa* or *sangats*) of the Sikh community only in the presence of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, through the *Panj Piaras*. All religious processions of the Sikhs are led by the *Panj Piaras*. All functions inaugurating important projects for the fulfilment of noble values, social welfare and service of humanity (*sewa*), for which foundation stones of *gurdwaras*, *dharamsalas*, *sarais*, roads, tanks, bridges, etc., are laid by the *Panj Piaras*. *Kar sewa* (desilting of holy tanks), repair and construction of *gurdwara* buildings are also initiated by the *Panj Piaras*.

The institution of *Panj Piaras* has been sanctified in the Sikh prayer. At the end of *Ardas*, *karah prasad* (sacramental food) is offered to the *Panj Piaras*, before it is distributed to the *sangat*.

The institution of *Panj Piaras* holds highest position after the gurus among the Sikhs. They became *defacto* and *de jure* representatives of the Sikh *Panth*. The leadership of the Sikh nation was imbibed in them. They exercise executive as well as judicial powers in community matters. The authority of the *Panj Piaras* is legitimate, and they have the word in deciding the socio-religious and political issues of the Sikh community. Once the matter of violation of the basic tenets of Sikhism on the part of a Sikh is brought to the notice of *Sri Akal Takht Sahib*, the *Jathedar* is authorized to summon him before the *Panj Piaras* and punish the defaulter accordingly. The matter is discussed and decision (*mata*) is taken with common consent by the *Panj Piaras*. Then the

decision is announced to the *sangat*. These decisions are carried unanimously and it is supposed to have the sanctity of the *Guru* and any attempt afterwards to subvert the decision is regarded as a sacrilegious act. If a defaulter does not submit before the *Panj Piaras*, he is declared an outcaste and Sikhs are forbidden to have any contact with him. To the Sikh community, the authority of the *Panj Piaras* is supreme. No Sikh can defy the orders (*hukamnama*) and punishment (*tankhah*) imposed by the *Panj Piaras* for violating the Sikh code of conduct, Sikh beliefs, Sikh traditions and Sikh customs. This system is prevalent even today. The main sanction behind the authority of the *Panj Piaras* lies in the faith of the Sikhs that the *Guru* is mystically present among them.

The *Panj Piaras* are chosen by the *sangat* but the *jathedars* of the five *takhts* (the Sikh seats of authority, i.e., Sri Akal Takht Sahib, Sri Keshgarh Sahib, Sri Damdama Sahib, Sri Patna Sahib and Sri Hazoor Sahib) hold special status as *Panj Piaras*.

The institution of *Panj Piaras* has greatly influenced the culture, thought, social values and political behaviour of Sikhs. The annals of Sikh history are replete with evidence of the vital role of the *Panj Piaras*. It has helped to nourish the continuity of democratic traits and collective responsibility in the Sikh community. The Sikh democratic concept of collective responsibility was put into practice by Banda Singh Bahadur, who gave militant leadership to the Sikh *Panth*, fought against the Mughals, and established the first Sikh *Raj* in the Punjab (1710-1716). The rule of Banda Singh Bahadur was established on the basis of egalitarian principles. The land-less peasants were granted lands. Even the seal and coins of Banda Singh Bahadur do not bear the name of the ruler, and are a true index of the democratic tradition of the Sikhs. This republican spirit continued to prevail in the political set-up of the *Misls*, when all matters of the common interest of the Sikh community were discussed in the assemblies of the *Sarbat Khalsa* at Sri Akal Takht Sahib (the highest political seat of the Sikhs) at Amritsar. In the assemblies of the *Sarbat Khalsa*, decisions were taken by passing the *gurmata*s (resolutions) in the holy presence of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* for collective action of the Sikhs. During this time, defence of Sikh territories and holy places

against the onslaughts of the Mughals and the Afghans was the major problem of the Sikhs. During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the democratic and republican trait of the Sikh heritage is reflected in various aspects of the rulership of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh do not bear his name. They carry the same legends which were prevalent on the coinage of Banda Singh Bahadur and the Sikh *Misls*. Even the government of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was called *Sarkar Khalsa*. The Maharaja never wore any crown or sat on a throne. The impact of the institution of *Panj Piaras* on the Sikh community can be traced even in the development of the defence organisation and the military system of the Sikhs after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1839), when the *Khalsa* army was left leaderless under the anarchy infused by treachery and intrigues of the military generals and ministers of Lahore Darbar. During this period (1839-48) of chaos and confusion, the Army *Panchayats* played a very crucial role in inspiring the Sikhs to keep their democratic traditions alive. The Army *Panchayats* kept them politically conscious of their rights by guiding them to carry on the struggle against the British. The proclamation of the *Panchayat* councils by the Sikh army was a great achievement of the republican traits of Sikhs, associated with the institution of *Panj Piaras*. It would not be out of place here to give a note on the role of the army *Panchayats*, its objective, working, responsibility and achievements at the Lahore Darbar.

After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, a decade of political instability, disintegration and decay followed. The weakening of the central power at the Lahore Darbar seriously affected the discipline and command of its defence organisation. Within a short time, almost all control of the Government, over the Army (*Fauj-i-Ain*, *Fauj-i-Qwaid* and *Jagirdari Fauj*) disappeared rapidly. The *Jagirdars* became independent of control of the Lahore Darbar. However, the soldiers of the Sikh army collected together and kept the ethos of the Sikh democratic spirit alive by introducing the army *Panchayat* system. These *Panchayats* were elected at the rate of five *panches* (judges) per Company. The elected representative of Army Companies had no independent position, but existed only as part and parcel of the Regimental

Committees. All the committees were subject to control of their electors. The Regimental Committees held their meetings frequently. The general meetings of all the *chaudharies* (magistrates) helped these *Panchayats* to enforce discipline among the troops by punishing the excesses committed by them. These Regimental *Panchayats*, by the imposition of an iron discipline, saved the Lahore Kingdom's army from disintegration. The army *Panchayats* acquired a highly representative character. The army assumed the title of the *Khalsa* (supreme Sikh authority). It began to issue orders under its own seal to the regent, army officers and local officers. The Lahore *Darbar* was forbidden to make any communication with the British without its sanction. The soldiers established Regimental Committees that took disciplinary powers from the officers. This attitude of the army was the reaction of the treacherous role of the army officers of the Lahore *Darbar*. In fact, the army officers had forfeited the trust and confidence of their soldiers, because in collaboration with the civil officers, they were secretly holding negotiations with the British to barter away the independence of the Sikh Kingdom.

The introduction of the army *Panchayat* system at Lahore *Darbar* is a singularly characteristic event and it acted as the supreme civil and military authority in the State. However, these councils did not alter the structure of the Sikh State, or forwarded any proposal to replace their nominal sovereign. In fact, the Regimental Committees were independent and non-interfering in the local administration. But, unitedly these councils became the supreme national authority of the Sikh Kingdom of Lahore.

The army *Panchayats* had also established rapport with the people. Generally, the councils held their deliberations in public, its decisions were precise and their execution firm and instantaneous. These councils curbed the ambitions of the Dogra Ministers of Jammu enhanced to the title of *Rajas*, quelled the insurrections of the pretenders to the throne of the Lahore Kingdom (i.e., Kashmira Singh and Peshaura Singh), liquidated the Sandhanwalia faction, and proclaimed Duleep Singh, the minor son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh as the successor to the Lahore Kingdom.¹³

The achievements of the army *Panchayats* bear testimony to the potentiality of the institution of *Panj Piaras*. This development in the past history of the Sikhs provides an incentive to the Sikh community in the present context to deal with most of their critical internal problems, like helping the victims of recent Punjab problem, building a close-knit society, eradicating poverty, illiteracy, women abuse, child abuse, and other social evils. The Sikhs should establish local councils to deal with their local problems. These councils could solve the issues of autocracy of the elite groups or individuals and corrupt and dishonest leadership.

The institution of *Panj Piaras* has also acted as a safety valve for the security of the Sikh value system. It is a known fact that the Sikh community has gone through the most hazardous challenges at several stages of their history, but they have kept their tryst with destiny and managed to survive. During the nineteenth century, they faced a crisis of identity as a distinct community under the dominating impact of the activities of some Christian missionaries, and the revival of orthodox *Brahminism*. At this crucial juncture, there appeared a phenomenon of Sikh resurgence in the form of the Singh Sabha Movements, which consequently emerged as a strong religious and political organisation of the Sikhs on modern lines. At this juncture, the spirit of collective responsibility and the tradition of *Panj Piaras* motivated the Sikh masses and provided them effective guidance and competent leadership to deal with the situation. Sikhs were fully conscious of the potentiality of this institution in reviving their glorious traditions and fundamental doctrines of Sikhism. They did not look to a single leader to direct their social, political and religious activities, but opted for a collective leadership. It is clear from the history of the Singh Sabha Movement that its success was, to a great extent, the result of the able leadership of its five Sikh leaders i.e., Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhawalia, Professor Gurmukh Singh, Giani Ditt Singh, Sardar Maya Singh and Sardar Jawahar Singh. Under their efficient stewardship, rational thinking, sincere commitment, and profound contributions, the Singh Sabha Movement became a mass movement among the Sikhs within a short time. Their joint leadership, with the support of the Sikh masses, gave suitable

response to the challenges from outside, and protected the cultural heritage of the Sikhs at the hour of crisis. The Sikhs moved from a state of social confusion and political insecurity to a state of self-awareness and self-confidence. They evolved into a well organised community and political entity. With the formation of the Akali Dal and the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, the advent of Sikh Renaissance attained its full maturity. The spirit of self-awareness heralded an era of cultural awakening among the Sikhs. Serious attempts were made in the spheres of literature and journalism to produce standard books, tracts, pamphlets, newspapers and magazines, projecting fundamental Sikh doctrines and recording true Sikh traditions and their glorious past. The objective was to motivate the Sikhs to follow their original beliefs, traditions and practices. In fact, the Singh Sabha Movement regenerated the tradition of collective responsibility enshrined in the institution of *Panj Piaras* and made the Sikhs conscious of the utility and validity of their democratic and republican traits.

The Singh Sabha Movement was followed by the Gurdwara Reforms Movement, that re-established the control of the Sikhs over their historical gurdwaras, which were earlier under the control of the *mahants*, the British agents and the British hegemony. This great success was due to the collective efforts of the Sikh community under a collective leadership.

The institution of *Panj Piaras* is the highest court of appeal for the Sikhs. The scope and jurisdiction of the authority of the *Panj Piaras* is very wide. It is an effective check on arbitrary ways of working of the elites of the community. In the customary system of Sikh law, the sole authority to make impartial decisions in Panthic matters is vested in the *Panj Piaras*. Its decisions are bound to be followed by all Sikhs whatsoever their private or official position may be. If a person shows some reluctance in obeying the authority of the *Panj Piaras*, he is declared an outcaste, and Sikhs do not retain any social contacts with him. There is not even a single example on record in Sikh history of violating the orders of the *Panj Piaras*. There is a well known story about how Baba Phula Singh, the famous Akali leader, incharge of Sri Akal Takht Sahib, once ordered Maharaja Ranjit Singh to appear before Sri Akal

Takht Sahib for violating the Sikh code of conduct. The Maharaja obeyed the order and presented himself before the Sikh *sangat* and the *Panj Piaras* to accept the punishment (*tankhah*) imposed on him.

In recent past, Sikh leaders like Master Tara Singh, Sant Fateh Singh, Jathedar Jagdev Singh Talwandi, Chief Minister Surjit Singh Barnala, President Giani Zail Singh, Jathedar Santokh Singh, Chief Minister Darabara Singh, Cabinet Minister Buta Singh, Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal and several other Sikhs holding high ranks and positions, have been declared as *tankhaiyas* (defaulters) at the Akal Takht Sahib for their conduct and activities against the general interest of the Sikh community. It is to be noted here that, all the defaulters are supposed to be treated and tried uniformly. Recently, controversial issues related to academic problem of the Sikh Studies and charges of aspersions and doubts on authenticity of the Sikh Scripture and Sikh doctrines, have also been referred to the *Panj Piaras* at the Akal Takht. There is no room for any discrimination in this democratic procedure of the Sikh law even if one is holding the highest office in the political or religious organisation of the Sikh Community. There are traditions, conventions and specific guidance for observing the procedure for issuing the edicts from the *Sri Akal Takhat Sahib*. The *Jathedar* of *Sri Akal Takhat Sahib* with the consent of the *Panj Piaras* representing the five *Takhats* (*Sri Kesgarh Sahib*, *Anandpur Sahib*, *Sri Damdama Sahib*, *Sri Patna Sahib* and *Sri Hazoor Sahib*) is supposed to issue *hukamnamas* on the serious community problems of the Sikhs. Meeting of the *Sarbat Khalsa* (General Assembly of the Sikhs) is also supposed to be called before issuing *Hukamnamas* on problems concerning the *maryada* (code of conduct) and other problems of the Sikh community. However, local problems are to be tackled with the consent of the *Panj Piaras* as the action demands. In recent developments, the working of the Akal Takhat Sahib has been found short of following the Sikh traditions, conventions and *maryada* in its true spirit. All parties, factions, groups and individuals have to obey the decision of the *Panj Piaras*, forgetting their personal rivalries. The orders of the *Panj Piaras* are issued not with any vindictiveness, but with a purpose to

bring conformity, unity and solidarity in the Sikh *Panth* besides reform of the individual. Therefore, the punishment meted out is willingly accepted by the defaulters. The problems of local interests are discussed in local *sangats*, which exist in most of the places where the Sikhs have settled down. The matters of *Panthic* interests are referred to Sri Akal Takht Sahib for further action.

By forming the unique institution of *Panj Piaras* about half a century before French philosopher, J.J. Rousseau introduced his theory of 'Social Contract' (1762), and about a century and half before Karl Marx formulated his 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' (1848), the great Guru Gobind Singh had made a most notable contribution to the modern political thought by introducing the idea of the Republic of the Five.

The institution of *Panj Piaras* has proved to be a strong measure in fostering cohesion and integration in the Sikh community. The impact of this institution can be traced from the Sikh history of the post-Guru Gobind Singh period. It was the observance of this tradition which preserved the Sikh unity intact under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur, the *Dal Khalsa*, the *Sarbat Khalsa*, the *Misls*, the *Khalsa Raj*, the *Army Panchayats* (after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh), and the Singh Sabha Movement. Even at present, the Central Sikh organisation, the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee observe with reverence the institution of *Panj Piaras* in its working, to deal with socio-religious and political problems of the Sikhs.

The Sikhs have a glorious heritage and the annals of the Sikh history are full of accounts of their heroism and sacrifice. The Sikhs are very sensitive to aspersion on their psyche. They react aggressively in such situations. Currently, the Sikh community is again facing serious problems concerning preservation of their distinct identity, the democratic working of its central organisation, its traditions and practices, the prejudice and bias of the anti-Sikh lobbies, the misrepresentation of Sikhism by hostile bodies with vested interests, and various challenges of the modern materialistic culture to the universal doctrines and values of Sikhism. The Sikhs are confronting multi-dimensional social, religious, political and

academic issues from within and without. The situation demands serious contemplation on the part of the representative bodies of the Sikh Community, the Sikh leaders, Sikh missionaries and Sikh academicians to renew their institutions with specific expertise to deal with specific problems. It is the dire need of the hour to strengthen and revive the institution of *Panj Piaras* at the global level for consolidating the present position and future survival of the Sikhs as a minority all over the world.

Notes and References:

1. The ceremony of the initiation of the *Khalsa* on the Baisakhi day (1699) and its *maryada* (code of conduct) and its rites *Khande de Pahul* are recorded for the first time by Sainapat, the court poet of Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur Sahib in his work, *Sri Gursobha* (1711 A.D.) Ed. Shamsheer Singh Ashok, Pub. Sikh History Research Board, Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar, 1967, Ch. 5, pp. 29-41. However, *Gursobha* does not list the name of the *Panj Piaras*.

The episode of the *Panj Piaras*, their names and detail of the preparation of *amrit* have been recorded in the *Gurbilas* literature associated with Guru Gobind Singh. See, Koer Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*. (1751 A.D.) Ed. Shamsheer Singh Ashok, Pub. Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968, Ch. 9, pp. 127-139, also Sukha Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi 10* (1797 A.D.) Mss (Personal Library) Dr. Trilochan Singh, Bhai Randhir Singh Nagar, Ludhiana, folios 90-92, 45-4.

2. Kavi Sainapat describes the above episode as following :

ਤਾਹ ਸਮੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਬੈਠ ਸੁਨਾਯੋ । ਖਾਲਸ ਆਪਨੇ ਰੂਪ ਬਤਾਯੋ ॥
 ਖਾਲਸ ਹੀ ਸੋ ਹੈ ਮਮ ਕਾਮਾ । ਬਖਸ ਕੀਉ ਖਾਲਸ ਕੋ ਜਾਮਾ ॥
 ਖਾਲਸ ਮੇਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ, ਦੇ ਖਾਲਸ ਕੇ ਪਾਸਿ ॥
 ਆਦਿ ਅੰਤਿ ਹੀ ਹੋਤ ਹੈ, ਖਾਲਸ ਹੀ ਮੈ ਪ੍ਰਗਾਸ ॥

Sri Gursobha, Ch. 18, p. 51.

Santokh Singh author of *Suraj Prakash Granth* records the injunction as:
 ਸਿੰਘ ਸੁ ਰਹਤ ਪੰਚ ਜਾਹਿ ਮਿਲੇ ।
 ਮਮ ਸਰੂਪ ਸੋ ਦੇਖਹੁ ਭਲੇ ॥

Suraj Prakash Granth, 1843 A.D., Ed. Bhai Vir Singh, Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, Vol. 14, p. 6331.

3. Macauliffe, M.A., '*The Sikh Religion*', S. Chand & Co., New Delhi, Vol. 5, 96.
4. ਦਸਾਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਜੋਤ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਪਾਠ ਦੀਦਾਰ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਧਰ ਕੇ

ਬੋਲੋ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ । ਪੰਜਾਂ ਪਿਆਰਿਆਂ, ਚੌਹਾਂ ਸਾਹਿਬਜ਼ਾਦਿਆਂ, ਚਾਲ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਮੁਕਤਿਆਂ,
ਹਠੀਆਂ, ਜਪੀਆਂ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਮ ਜਪਿਆ, ਵੰਡ ਛਕਿਆ, ਦੇਗ ਚਲਾਈ, ਤੇਗ ਵਾਹੀ, ਦੇਖ
ਕੇ ਅਣਡਿੱਠ ਕੀਤਾ, ਤਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਿਆਰਿਆਂ, ਸਚਿਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਧਰ ਕੇ
ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਬੋਲੋ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ॥

Quoted from *Ardas*

5. ਆਗਿਆ ਭਈ ਅਕਾਲ ਕੀ ਤਬੈ ਚਲਾਯੋ ਪੰਥ ॥
ਸਭ ਸਿਖਨ ਕੋ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨਯੋ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ॥
ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਜੀ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹ ॥
ਜਾ ਕਾ ਹਿਰਦਾ ਸੁਧ ਹੈ ਬੋਜ ਸਬਦ ਮੈ ਲੇਹੁ ॥

According to a Popular Sikh Tradition.

Rehatnama Bhai Prahlad Singh Ka states :

ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੇ ਬਚਨ ਸਿਉ, ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਚਲਾਇਓ ਪੰਥੁ ।

ਸਭ ਸਿੱਖਨ ਕਉ ਹੁਕਮ ਯਹ, ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਿ ॥

Ashok, Shamsheer Singh, *Guru Khalse De Hukamname*, Sikh History Research Board, Amritsar, 1979, p. 58, also Piara Singh Padam, *Rehatname*, Pub. Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1995, p. 58.

6. The importance of the *Panj Piaras* has been stressed with great emphasis in the *Rehatnamas* (Sikh Codes of Conduct). See *Guru Khalse de Hukamname*, Ed. Shamsheer Singh Ashok, Sikh History Research Board, Amritsar, 1979 (Typed Copy):

Rehatnama Bhai Chaupa Singh records :

ਪੰਜ ਸਿਖ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਪਾਹੁਲ ਦੇਣੀ । ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਸਿਖ ਕਰਨਾ ।

Ibid., p. 21.

Tankhah Updesh Bhai Daya Singh informs :

ਪੰਚ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਿਲ ਏਕਠੇ, ਕਰੈ ਬਿਬੇਕ ਬਿਚਾਰ ॥

ਤਨਖਾਹ ਰਹਿਤ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਕਰੈ, ਦੇਤ ਦੇਖ ਕੇ ਟਾਰ ॥

Ibid., p. 63.

Rehatnama Bhai Prahlad Singh Ka says :

ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮਾਨੀਐ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹੁ ॥

ਜੋ ਸਿਖ ਮੈ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਚਹੈ, ਬੋਜ ਇਨੋ ਮੈ ਲੇਹੁ ॥

Ibid., p. 57.

Later Sikh writers like Sarup Das Bhalla, *Mahima Prakash*, 1773 A.D., Pub. Bhasha Vibhag Punjab, Patiala, Part II, 1971, p. 134, Kesar Singh Chhibbar, *Banasawali Nama Dasan Patshahian Ka*, 1779 A.D., Pub. in *Parakh*, Panjab University, Chandigarh, Vol. II, 1972, p. 129, Samokh Singh, *Suraj Prakash Granth*, 1823 A.D., Ed. Bhai Vir Singh, Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, Vol. XIV, p. 6331, and Gian Singh Giani, *Panth Prakash*, 1874 A.D. Pub. Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, 1970, Part II, follow this tradition of the foundation of the *Khalsa* and *Panj Piaras* with additional details. The following remarks are noteworthy. Sarup Das Bhalla writes in this context :

ਪੰਚ ਸਿਖ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਜੋ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਤਾ ਜਿਉ ਲਏ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਸਭ ਕੋਇ ॥

Mahima Prakash, 1773 A.D., Pub. Bhasha Vibhag Punjab, Patiala,
1971, Part II, p. 805.

Ratan Singh Bhangu writes :

ਜਹਿ ਜਹਿ ਪੰਜ ਭੁਜੰਗੀ ਹੋਇ ।
ਗੁਰਦੁਵਾਰੈ ਤੁਲ ਮੰਨ ਲਯੋ ਸੋਇ ।
ਪੰਜ ਭੁਜੰਗੀ ਜਹਿ ਇਕੱਤ੍ਰ ਹੋਇ ।
ਬੇਸ਼ਕ ਪਾਹੁਲ ਕਰ ਪਯਾਵੈ ਸੋਇ ।
ਪੰਜ ਭੁਜੰਗੀਅਨ ਤੇ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰਾਓ ।
ਜੋ ਮਾਂਗੋ ਸੋਈ ਫਲ ਪਾਓ ।

Prachin Panth Prakash, 1948 A.D., Ed. Bhai Vir Singh, Khalsa
Samachar, Amritsar, 1982, p. 45.

Santokh Singh accounts :

ਗੁਰ ਘਰ ਕੀ ਮਿਰਜਾਦਾ ਪੰਚਰੂ
ਪੰਚਰੂ ਪਾਹੁਲ ਪੂਰਬ ਪੀਨ ।
ਹੁਇ ਤਨਖਾਹੀਆ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਹਿ ਪੰਚਰੂ,
ਪਾਹੁਲ ਦੇਂ ਮਿਲਿ ਪੰਚ ਪ੍ਰਬੀਨ ।

Suraj Prakash Granth, 1843 A.D., Ed. Bhai Vir Singh, Khalsa
Samachar, Amritsar, Vol. 14, p. 5904.

He also writes :

ਜਿੰਘ ਸੁ ਰਹਤ ਪੰਚ ਜਹਿ ਮਿਲੇ । ਮਮ ਸਰੂਪ ਸੋ ਦੇਖਹੁ ਭਲੇ ।

Ibid., p. 6331.

Early European accounts also point out the significance of the *Panj Piaras* in the Sikh community. For the declaration about five Sikhs forming a congregation or about the assembly of five Sikhs ensuring the presence or the grace of the Guru, see Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, Pub. John Murray, London, 1812, p. 196; also Cunningham, J.D., *History of the Sikhs*, S. Chand & Co., Delhi, p. 63.

7. *Panch* (Five) is a Sanskrit term. It has been virtually adopted by various Indian Vernaculars. The numerical five was considered holy in the Hindu Mythology and the term *Panch* is regarded as a symbol of justice. The *Panches* (the five arbitrators) are considered as representatives of God, therefore, *Panches* constitute *Parmeshwar* (God, the Supreme Lord). The *Panchayat* is the traditional local administrative machinery in India since ages. It is a documentary evidence of the ancient Indian democratic system.

8. ਪੰਚ ਪਰਵਾਣ ਪੰਚ ਪਰਧਾਨੁ ॥ ਪੰਚੇ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਦਰਗਾਹਿ ਮਾਨੁ ॥
ਪੰਚੇ ਸੋਹਹਿ ਦਰਿ ਰਾਜਾਨੁ ॥ ਪੰਚਾ ਕਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਏਕੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ॥
ਜੇ ਕੋ ਕਹੈ ਕਰੈ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥ ਕਰਤੇ ਕੈ ਕਰਣੈ ਨਾਹਿ ਸੁਮਾਰੁ ॥

Japuji, Pauri 16, M1, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 3.

9. The honour attributed to the *Panj Piaras* by Guru Gobind Singh has been elucidated by the nineteenth century Sikh historian Bhai Santokh Singh as follows :

ਸਿਖ ਪੰਚਨ ਮਹਿ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਾਸਾ ॥

ਪੂਰਨ ਕਰੇ ਧਰਹਿ ਜੋ ਆਸਾ ॥

Gur Pratap Suraj Granth, Ain 2, Ansu 23, Vol. 14, p. 6331.

10. The importance of the presence of the assembly of the five Sikhs has been described by Guru Nanak Dev as following :

ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਪੰਚ ਸਬੇ ਗੁਰਭਾਈ ॥

Maru Sohile, M1, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1041.

The importance of the company of the *Panj* (five perfect ones) is also affirmed by Bhai Gurdas, the first Sikh scholar to produce a commentary on Sikh doctrines and the lives of the early Sikh Gurus. Bhai Gurdas was a contemporary of Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjun Dev and Guru Hargobind. Bhai Gurdas's work is a documentary evidence of the beliefs and practices of the Sikhs in the late sixteenth and early half of the seventeenth century. He comments on the above mentioned subject as :

ਇਕ ਸਿਖੁ ਦੁਇ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗੁ ਪੰਜੀ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ॥

Varan Bhai Gurdas, Var, 13, Ed. Bhai Vir Singh, Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 1964, p. 236.

Also :

ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਹੈ ਪੰਜ ਮਿਲਿ ਲੇਖ ਅਲੇਖ ਨ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਪਾਈ ।

Bhai Gurdas, *Ibid*, Var 29, p. 480.

Again, Bhai Gurdas refers to the assembly of five Sikhs as follows :

ਪੰਜ ਮਿਲੇ ਪਰਪੰਚ ਤਜਿ ਅਨਹਦ ਸਬਦ ਸਬਦ ਲਿਵਲਾਈ ॥

ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਗੁਰ ਭਾਈ ॥

Ibid, Var 29, p. 480.

11. Kapur Singh, *Sikhism for Modern Man*, Eds. Madanjit Kaur and Piar Singh, Pub. Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1992, pp. 66-67.
12. The gesture of the Guru was objected by the fellow Sikhs because Sikhism does not believe in the worship of idols, *avtars* (re-incarnation), and graves.
13. The narration of the above note is largely borrowed from Bhagat Singh's *Sikh Polity*, Oriental Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 310-314.

IDEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE KHALSA

Sikhism is one of the most prominent religious tradition of medieval India that has stood the test of time, whereas most of the contemporary Indian religious traditions have practically disappeared. Notwithstanding this fact, Sikhism is the youngest religion in the world and yet it is deemed to attain the status of world religion in the coming century. The uniqueness of Sikhism lies in the universal teachings of its preceptor *Gurus* and its strength lies in the traditions and institutions introduced by the *Gurus*, starting with Guru Nanak, the founding prophet (1469-1539) and culminating with the Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708).

Sikhism was carefully nurtured and firmly secured under the superb guidance of the ten *Gurus*. Under the command of these *gurus*, the Sikh community underwent a process of formation and course of discipline until its distinct character was fully developed under the guidance of Guru Gobind Singh. The Sikh ideals and institutions that emerged were in direct response to the socio-cultural needs and problems of Sikh community.

The challenge and response theory moves throughout the development of the Sikh history. The institution of Sikh guruship passed through many hazards but the Sikh *gurus* kept their tryst with their commitment even at the cost of self-sacrifice. The

martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev (1606) made for the protection of human rights against the atrocities of the theocratic Mughal State was a turning point in the history of the Punjab. The event presented an ideal of the highest sacrifice (*shaheedi*) and generated a new impulse for suffering and sacrifices which runs undiluted in the annals of Sikh history.

Development of far-reaching consequences took place in the Sikh affairs during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb, the contemporary Mughal ruler during the times of the Ninth Master, Guru Tegh Bahadur. Aurangzeb had adopted a resolute and uncompromising policy of repression. He was an orthodox and a fanatic Muslim, while Guru Tegh Bahadur stood for religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence. The Guru became a martyr to this cause for the protection of *tilak* and *janeu* (symbols of Hindu religion) in wake of the policy of forceful conversion followed by the Mughal State.

As soon as Guru Gobind Singh assumed the Guruship he decided to resist the tyranny of the reigning authority. Guru Gobind Singh gave recognition to recourse to the sword as a lawful alternative. It was *Dharam Yudh* (a battle of survival of life, of ideals, righteousness, justice and truth). A well planned policy of self-defence and solidarity was proclaimed by Guru Gobind Singh. The Sikhs took to arms to court death. The motive of the Guru's decision was the struggle for independence from slavery, tyranny and oppression enforced by an autocratic State and feudal machinery of the political set up of the Mughals. Before the commencement of his mighty deed, Guru Gobind Singh had created a spiritually inspired martial atmosphere and took practical steps to prepare people to follow his mission as servants of God and humanity.

Towards the end of seventeenth century Guru Gobind Singh urgently felt the need of re-organising the internal structure of the Sikh community in order to bring about effective inter-cohesion and prepare fully for external defence. After the experience of the Pre-*Khalsa* battles with the Rajput Hill Rajas the Guru was always on his guard against any future design from their side and their allies the Mughals against the Sikhs. The Guru visualised the necessity of

the creation of the saint soldiers-the *Khalsa*, primarily for the defensive requirements of the Sikhs and any future difficulties of the community.

Guru Gobind Singh established direct relations with the Sikh *sangats* after eliminating the agencies of the *masands* (the representatives of the *Guru*) in order to effect reforms in the infrastructure of the Sikh Organisation.¹ The creation of the *Khalsa* was a contingent phenomenon dictated by the exigencies of the situation. Guru Gobind Singh gave concrete expression to his ideas and initiated the sacrament of baptismal ceremony, *Amrit* (Nectar) of *Khande de pahul* at Sri Anandpur Sahib on the famous Baisakhi Day of 1699. The Guru prescribed Five Articles of Faith-*Kakkars-Kaccha, Kara, Kirpan, Kesh* and *Kanga* to be worn by the *Khalsa*. He also banned the use of tobacco and recommended a special code of conduct (*rehat maryada*) for the physical, moral and social hygiene of the *Khalsa*.²

What were the ideas to which Guru Gobind Singht tried to give concrete expression by creating the *Khalsa* on Baisakhi day of 1699? Sirdar Kapur Singh answers this question as following :

It would seem that these basic concepts were five in number, symbolic of and synchronous in their configuration and *gestalt*, though not in their origin and introduction, with the Five Beloved Ones whom the Guru initially created into his Order or the *Khalsa*.

These five ideas are :

- (1) the absorption of the individual soul into or its contiguity with the Infinite Soul, as the ultimate aim and *summum bonum* of human life, and, as a corollary, religion and religious activity being the activity *par excellence*, worthy of serious minds;
- (2) an equalitarian and global fraternity in which this activity must be grounded and into which this ideal must permeate;
- (3) acceptance of new principles of politics, subordinated to those of ethics, resulting in the universal acceptance of the tradition of open diplomacy;

- (4) organisation into the Order of the Khalsa of those who agree to dedicate their lives to and are competent for furtherance of these ideas; and
- (5) the vision of a new and regenerated humanity, heralded by the Baisakhi of March 30, 1699, and symbolised by the day of Baisakhi.

By understanding these five ideas alone, which stimulated the basic impulses of the work and teachings of Guru Gobind Singh, it is possible to understand the temper and soul of the Sikh history, and the true significance of Guru Gobind Singh as a religious prophet.^{2a}

The Khalsa ideology brought a revolutionary change in the Indian thought and a transformation of far reaching impact on the history of Punjab and the country as a whole.

The baptism of the *Khanda de pahul* is a process of spiritual transformation to steel wills of initiates for moral action. For the *Khalsa*, the ideal self is to be realised by the historical man here in this very world. It is possible only if the self is actively engaged in discharging categorical action in the society. The objective of Guru Gobind Singh was to create a self dignified man who transcends the fear of death. He made it obligatory for the *Khalsa* to become a soldier-saint (*sant sipahi*) who would wield arms only for a righteous cause. Therefore, the *Khalsa* was an ideally constituted divinely oriented militant society organised in order to realize socio-spiritual unity in real terms. The Guru made the ordinary man a dauntless warrior. The *Khalsa* were men of spirit. In the battlefield they made martyrs of themselves on the altar of Truth. The Guru bestowed on the *Khalsa* his blessings in warfield. He ordained that they should uphold right in every place and destroy evil in every form by all means available and should not submit to oppression and tyranny, but to resist it, if necessary by force. Guru Gobind Singh also made it categorically clear that his Sikhs were neither Hindus nor Muslims and forbade the worship of all holy texts other than the *Adi Granth* (*Guru Granth Sahib*). The Guru pronounced his rejection of the variant philosophical view points of the Vedic and Semitic scriptures and their religious diversities and recommended the worship of the Supreme Lord to the *Khalsa*.

The *Khalsa* imbibes an ideal man's intent in the support of goodness and morality and the protection of basic human rights. They had an external identity and an inner vision. The Guru gave distinguishing marks to the Sikhs and they were made distinct even among thousands. This trend of revolutionary attitude was the manifestation of the outer expression of the inner spirit and sense of duty for the defence of the faith and welfare of humanity. For this objective and purpose every member of the *Khalsa* commonwealth was a crusader in the caravan of revolution initiated by Guru Gobind Singh. The consciousness of their distinct identity and constant recall of meditation or *nam-simran* led them to self-realisation and spontaneous practice of virtuous and gallant-deeds. The Guru's injunction was :

Blessed are those of this world, who invoke
God's name in their minds
and fight against the evil in their hearts.³

The edifice of the institution of the *Khalsa* was built on strong ideological basis of the fundamental Sikh doctrines and practices. The creation of the *Khalsa* was a significant event in the history of the Sikhs. The mode of creation of the *Khalsa* at the call of the Guru to his devout Sikhs to come forward to offer their head is a symbolic legend deeply rooted in the Sikh ethos of readiness for sacrifice, of the mundane life sublimated to the Divine cause. The notion of the logic of 'Die to Live' was emphatically pronounced by Guru Nanak, the preceptor of Sikhism, who had himself laid down this test in one of his hymns.⁴ After administering baptism to the five Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh stood up before these *Panj Piyaras* and asked them to baptise him in the same manner as he had baptised them. This was a unique event in the history of world religions. Never before had a prophet or a *guru* had been baptised by his own disciples.⁵

The act of Guru Gobind Singh seeking baptism from his followers reveals the democratic ethos of Sikhism pointing to the equation that Guru and the follower becomes one in spirit with the boon of *Amrit*. Henceforth, all were given one identity and equal status in the *Khalsa* brotherhood which recognised no distinction of caste, creed, low-high, sex, race and nationality.⁶ The *Khalsa*

recognised individual dignity of the man and accepted no other temporal power except the sovereignty of the God. Thus, the Guru established a unique organisation of mechanical and organic solidarity and gave it a great glory.⁷

By the creation of the *Khalsa*, Guru Gobind Singh infused the spirit of valour, heroism and sacrifice in the Sikhs. The *Khalsa* was supposed to be ever ready to sacrifice its all at the call of righteousness. In fact the acceptance of the *Khalsa* was an oath of allegiance to the cause of humanity.⁸

After taking the initiation of *Amrit* all Sikhs were elevated to a special status and were hence forth to be called as 'Singhs'. They were to observe the prescribed *rehat maryada* (code of conduct). The Guru not only transformed them in name and form but in spirit and attitude also. The resurgence of the Sikh community under Guru Gobind Singh was of great historical significance and far reaching consequences in institutionalizing the ideology of Sikhism. Through the bestowal of *Amrit* and five K's the Guru blessed the Sikhs with a distinct identity and a strong sense of belonging. Guru Gobind Singh, through his baptism, poured new life into his Sikhs, invested them with his own personality and imparted an aura of the spirit of purity into his followers. The Guru considered *Khalsa* as his most cherished desire.⁹ The Guru blessed the *Khalsa* with the boon of immortality.¹⁰

Guru Gobind Singh considered the *Khalsa* as his special form. While announcing the foundation of the *Khalsa* Guru Gobind Singh himself proclaimed :

The *Khalsa* is my determinate form
I am immanent in the *Khalsa*.¹¹

Guru Gobind Singh declared the baptised Sikhs to be his embodiment rather his otherself; his beloved ideal. However, the acclamation of the *Khalsa* was a hard credit. The Guru describes qualifying requisites for entering the fold of the *Khalsa* as following:

He who keeps alight unquenchable torch of Truth,
and never sways from the thought of One God;
He who has full love and confidence in God,

and does not put his faith, even by mistake
in fasting; on the graves of Muslim saints,
Hindu crematoriums or Jogi's places of sepulchre,
he who recognises One God
and no pilgrimages, alms giving,
no destruction of life, penances or austerities,
and in whose heart the light of the Perfect One shines,
he is to be recognised as a pure member of the *Khalsa*.¹²

The Order of the *Khalsa* claimed at its birth to be a new way of life, the distinct community of the spiritual democracy. The most important concern of the mission of Guru Gobind Singh's *Khalsa* was a concrete programme of social integration of caste ridden pluralistic Indian society.¹³ The *Panj Piyaras* belonged to five different regions of the Indian Sub-continent. The *Khalsa* had been enjoined to forget the pluralistic thought preached by the *Vedas* and *Kateb* and other religious texts but to worship the *Akal* (The Timeless/God).¹⁴ The dictum of the Guru to the *Khalsa* is 'God destroys the enemies of the righteous'¹⁵ and a religious dispensation can face any situation if it accepts God as death. In 'Ramavtar' Death with sword (*Aspan*) has been equated with God by Guru Gobind Singh.¹⁶

The commonwealth of the *Khalsa* was founded on the basis of all-round equality. While describing the aim of the creation of the *Khalsa*, Sirdar Kapoor Singh writes :

What positive specific means did Guru Gobind Singh intend, should be applied for the creation and establishment of the global Fraternity consisting of equal members and grounded in a universal culture, which represents a living and creative synthesis of all the great cultures of the world, and which must ennoble and sustain human society in different climes and countries.¹⁷

With the formation of the *Khalsa* a unique novel *panth* was established by Guru Gobind Singh. Bhai Gurdas 2nd emphatically records:

Beholder (He) established his Own *Panth*
With immense vigour and zeal.¹⁸

Bhai Sukha Singh a Sikh historian of the early nineteenth century had visualised the future potentialities of the *Khalsa* to attain the status of a world religion. He accounts :

It is basic to know that
This divine royal sword-emblem uniform that,
In His infinite compassion for mankind,
the Guru confers on the Elect,
Is the final and unique world religion
To be the guide and model for the future world society.¹⁹

The *Khalsa* was founded with a strict code of conduct for the all round development of the character and personality of a Sikh. Guru Gobind Singh, in very categorical terms enjoined upon the *Khalsa* to observe discipline and to preserve and guard their distinct self-identity. The Guru also warned his followers that his relationship and association with the *Khalsa* is subject to their adherence to this binding. The Guru commands :

The *Khalsa* shall continue to be blessed with all my powers,
So long as it preserves its identity and uniqueness.
But the moment, the Sikhs take to Brahminical path,
I would not stand by them.²⁰

Bhai Nand Lal, a close associate of Guru Gobind Singh gives the attributes of the *Khalsa* as following :

Khalsa is one who does not speak ill of others;
Khalsa is one who fights in the front ranks.
Khalsa is one who conquers the five evils;
Khalsa is one who destroys doubts.
Khalsa is one who gives up ego;
Khalsa is one who keeps away from women; not his wife.
Khalsa is one who looks upon all as his own;
Khalsa is one who attunes himself with God.²¹

Bhai Praladh Singh, the author of *Rehatnama* records the verdict of Guru Gobind Singh about the test of the *Khalsa* as ;

'He alone who live upto the Sikh ideals, he alone is my Sikh...²² True Sikh would not loose the sense of discrimination between good and evil even in hours of struggle.²³

Therefore, the Sikhs were asked both to maintain highest moral standards and to faithfully pursue the socio-political objectives of the *Khalsa*.

In contemporary literature there is a great emphasis on the observance of ethical values by the *Khalsa*. According to Sainapat *Khalsa* is one :

He who shuns the company of the five evils,
loves to associate with noble men,
Owns *dharma* and compassion, gives up ambition...
He is the *Khalsa* of the *Wahe Guru*.²⁴

Guru Gobind Singh looked upon his *Khalsa* with highest esteem and reverence. The Guru regarded *Khalsa* as the repository of all the powers of the *Panth* (Sikh community). The Guru expresses his deep sense of gratitude to the *Khalsa* by attributing all his achievements and endowments as the benediction of the *Khalsa*. In great humility the Guru pronounced :

My victories in the battles are
all due to my followers-the *Khalsa*.
They have filled my stores.
I owe to them my learning.
It is their sacrifice that has vanished my foes.
Their grace kept me away from ill.
My charity has been elevated by their benediction—
Otherwise, millions of beggars like me go unnoticed.²⁵

Before his death Guru Gobind Singh (at that time at Nanded in Deccan) had commissioned his disciple Banda Singh (original name Lachman Dass also known as Madho Dass Bairagi) to go to Punjab and conferred upon him the mission of leading the *Khalsa* struggle against the persecution of the Mughals and charged him with the duty of punishing Wazir Khan, the Faujdar of Sirhind and his men who had prosecuted the Sikhs and murdered his sons. Banda Singh reached Punjab, reorganised the Sikhs and commenced his mission. He was successful in rousing the downtrodden peasantry of the Punjab to take up arms and to join the *Khalsa* against the Mughal State. For his bravery, courage and chivalry Banda Singh earned the title of 'Bahadur'.

rights, promotion of moral values and ethical norms, social concern, altruism, harmony with nature, message of universal brotherhood, multi-culturalism, inter-religious understanding and welfare of the whole humanity. By the creation of the *Khalsa* Guru Gobind Singh gave a solid framework of social solidarity to the Sikh community and a martial race to the Indian Nation.

The famous historian Sir Charles Elliot has observed that :

The Sikh religion is of special interest, since it has created not only a political society, but also customs so distinctive that those who profess it, rank in common esteem, as a separate race.³⁶

In his preparations for the proclamation of the *Khalsa*, Guru Gobind Singh did not change any religious ideals preached by the preceding nine Sikh Gurus. He had not only all their attributions but had also acquired the power to mould the pacifist *Nanak Panthies* (followers of Guru Nanak) into a creed of warriors (*Sant Sipahi*) and a nation (*Khalsa Commonwealth*) committed to the ideal of the equalitarian society. Guru Gobind Singh had deeply inspired the followers of Guru Nanak by providing them with a high degree of motivation through the creation of *Khalsa* to achieve the goal prescribed by the founder of Sikhism. Subsequently, the faith founded by Guru Nanak became a political force. Yet it involved no departure from the essential tenets preached by him for the amelioration of man in relation to society. The ideological perspective of the *Khalsa* by Guru Gobind Singh was the natural climax of the 230 years of spiritual and social awakening introduced by Guru Nanak.

Guru Gobind Singh raised the issue of a dynamic role of religion. He had vowed to build a secular and democratic society and promised to improve the life of individuals in this world. The Guru stood for a unique, more amplified and cosmic vision of the future world culture through the process of mutual assimilation of truths revealed in the consciousness of mankind as a whole. Throughout his life struggle against the forces of evils and injustice Guru Gobind Singh sacrificed his all to establish universal humanitarian values to mobilise people in the name of God and

service of humanity to open the doors of a promising future for the welfare of the global society. Guru Gobind Singh laid down the ordinance, as a testament of love of God "ever remain free and sovereign on this earth, for ever and ever".³⁷ This is the ideological socio-political context in which the Sikhs have to pursue their religious life on this earth.

Notes and References:

1. Guru Gobind Singh comments upon the malpractices of the *masands* as following :

ਜੋ ਕਰਿ ਕੋਊ ਮਸੰਦਨ ਸੋ ਕਹੈ ਸਰਬ ਦਰਬ ਲੈ ਮੋਹਿ ਅਬੈ ਦੈ ॥
 ਲੇਉ ਹੀ ਲੇਉ ਕਹੈ ਸਭ ਕੋ ਨਰ ਕੋਊ ਨ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬਤਾਇ ਹਮੈ ਦੈ ॥
 ਜੋ ਕਰਿ ਸੇਵ ਮਸੰਦਨ ਕੀ ਕਹੈ ਆਨਿ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸਭੈ ਮੋਹਿ ਦੀਜੈ ॥
 ਜੋ ਕਛੁ ਮਾਲ ਤਵਾਲਯ ਸੋ ਅਬ ਹੀ ਉਠਿ ਭੇਟ ਹਮਾਰੀ ਹੀ ਕੀਜੈ ॥

... ..
 ਲੂਟਤ ਹੈ ਪਸੁ ਲੋਗਨ ਕੋ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਨ ਪਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ ਕੇ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਵੈ ॥੩੦॥

If any one go to the *masands*, they will tell him
 to bring all his property at once and give to them.

Every one saith bring me, bring me,
 but nobody would show the God.

If any one serve the *masands*, they will say,

Fateh and give us all thine offerings,

Go at once and make a present to us of

Whatever property is in thy house.

They are inhuman, they rob the innocent people
 and never sing the praise of the Lord.

'Sri Mukh Vak', Patshahi 10.

Swayyas 'Jagat Jot', *Dasam Granth* pp. 715-716.

Sainapat, the court poet of Guru Gobind Singh testifies the action taken by the Guru against the *Masands* as :

ਤਜ ਮਸੰਦ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਏਕ ਜਪ ਯਹਿ ਬਿਬੇਕ ਤਹਾ ਕੀਨ ॥

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸੋ ਸੇਵਕ ਮਿਲੇ ਨੀਰ ਮਧਿ ਜੋ ਮੀਨ ॥੧੨੨॥

... ..
 ਜਗਤ ਉਧਾਰਨ ਕਾਰਨੇ ਸਤਗੁਰ ਕੀਓ ਬਿਚਾਰ ॥

ਕਰ ਮਸੰਦ ਤਵ ਦੂਰ ਸਬ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਕਰ ਸੰਸਾਰ ॥੧੨੧॥

... ..
 ਮੰਨਤ ਗੋਲਕ ਅਰ ਦਸਵੰਧ ॥

ਘਰਿ ਮੈ ਰਾਖੇ ਤਜੇ ਮਸੰਦ ॥

ਭੇਟ ਕਾਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਜਾਇ ਹਜ਼ੂਰਿ ਚੜ੍ਹਾਵੈ ਸੋਇ ॥੧੪੧॥

... ..
ਕਰਨਹਾਰ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਕਰਤੇ ਕੀਆ ॥
ਕਰ ਮਸੰਦ ਸਭਿ ਦੂਰਿ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਕਰਿ ਲੀਆ ॥੧੪੨॥

Sainapat *Sri Gursobha*, ed. Ganda Singh,
Punjabi University Patiala, 1996, pp. 78-81.

2. The early sources of information of the *rehat maryada* of the Khalsa is available in various forms of *Rehatmamas* (codes of conduct) by different writers like that of Chaupa Singh, Bhai Nand Lal, Praladh Singh, Sewa Singh and Bhai Daya Singh etc.
- 2a. Kapur Singh, *Para'sarapras'na* (Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh), Eds. Piar Singh and Madanjit Kaur, Pub. Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1989, p.6.
3. ਧੰਨ ਜੀਓ ਤਿਹ ਕੋ ਜਗ ਮੈ ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਚਿੱਤ ਮੈ ਜੁਧੁ ਬਿਚਾਰੈ ॥ ਸਵੈਯਾ ॥
Sri Krishan Avtar, *Dasam Granth*, p. 570.

4. Guru Nanak emphatically pronounced :

ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ ॥
ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ ॥
ਇਤੁ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪੈਰੁ ਧਰੀਜੈ ॥
ਸਿਰੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਾਣਿ ਨਾ ਕੀਜੈ ॥

(If You seek to play the game of Divine love,
Then enter upon this path with your head upon your palm.
He who treads this path,
must prepare to give up life without demur.)

Slok Varan Te Vadhik, MI, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1412.

Guru Nanak supplements his above concept by his hymns which reads:

ਮਰਣੁ ਮੁਣਸਾ ਸੂਰਿਆ ਹਰੁ ਹੈ
ਜੋ ਹੋਇ ਮਰਨਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੋ ॥

(Fruitful is the dying of the brave person
who are approved before their death).

Rag Vadhans, MI, *Ibid.*, p. 579-80.

Guru Arjan Dev, the Fifth Master of the Sikhs who attained Martyrdom for the sake of righteousness and freedom of worship writes :

ਪਹਿਲਾ ਮਰਣੁ ਕਬੂਲਿ ਜੀਵਣ ਕੀ ਛਡਿ ਆਸ ॥
ਹੋਹੁ ਸਭਨਾ ਕੀ ਰੇਣੁਕਾ ਤਉ ਆਉ ਹਮਾਰੈ ਪਾਸਿ ॥

(First accept death, and leave all hopes of life
be like dust at the feet of all, and then come to me).

Rag Maru, Slok, M5, *Ibid.*, p. 1102.

5. In the words of Bhai Gurdas 2nd :

ਗੁਰ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਕੀਨੀ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮਨਮੁਖੀ ਦੁਹੇਲਾ ॥
ਵਾਹ ਵਾਹ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਪੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਚੇਲਾ ॥

Varan Bhai Gurdas, Var 41, Pauri I, p. 663.

6. The verdict of Guru Gobind Singh is :

ਭਿੰਨ ਭਿੰਨ ਸਭਾਹੁ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਨਾ ॥
ਏਕ ਰੂਪ ਕਿਨਹੂੰ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਾ ॥
ਜਿਨ ਜਾਨਾ ਤਿਨਹੀ ਸਿਧ ਪਾਈ ॥
ਬਿਨ ਸਮਝੇ ਸਿਧ ਹਾਥ ਨ ਆਈ ॥੧੦॥

Narad Chhand, Bachitar Natak, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I. p. 54.

7. The special status and unparalleled glory given to the *Khalsa* by Guru Gobind Singh has been described by Sainapat as following :

ਏ ਪ੍ਰਤਾਪ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਮਾਹੀ ॥
ਸਮਸਰ ਤਾਸ ਔਰ ਕੋਊ ਨਾਹੀ ॥
ਜੋ ਇਮ ਜਾਨੈ ਤਿਹ ਗਤਿ ਹੋਈ ॥
ਤਿਹ ਕੀ ਪਦਵੀ ਲਹੈ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥੨੦੯॥

Sainapat, Sri Gursobha, p. 89.

8. Bhai Gurdas 2nd affirms :

ਪੀਵਹੁ ਪਾਹੁਲ ਖੰਡੇਧਾਰ ਹੁਇ ਜਨਮ ਸੁਹੇਲਾ ॥

Varan Bhai Gurdas, Ed. Bhai Vir Singh, Pub. Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 1972, Var 41, Pauri I, p. 663.

9. Sainapat describes the form of *Khalsa* as :

ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਰੂਪ ॥
ਅਨੂਪ ਰੂਪ ॥੧੯੧॥

Sri Gursobha, p. 87.

10. Sainapat records Guru's verdict as :

ਸਰਬ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਆਦਿ ਅੰਤਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ॥੧੪੬॥

Sri Gursobha, p. 81.

11. ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਖਾਸ ॥

ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮਹਿ ਹਉ ਕਰਉ ਨਿਵਾਸ ॥

ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਮੁਖ ਹੈ ਅੰਗਾ ॥

ਖਾਲਸੇ ਕੇ ਹਉ ਸਦ ਸਦ ਸੰਗਾ ॥

Sarab Loh Granth, p. 667.

Also :

ਹਉ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਕਾਉ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੇ ॥

ਓਤ ਪੋਤ ਸਾਗਰ ਬੰਦੇਰੇ ॥

—*Ibid.*

12. ਜਾਗਤਿ ਜੋਤ ਜਪੈ ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸਰ ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਮਨ ਨੈਕ ਨ ਆਨੈ ॥
ਪੂਰਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਸਜੈ ਬ੍ਰਤ ਗੋਰ ਮਝੀ ਮਟ ਭੂਲ ਨ ਮਾਨੈ ॥
ਤੀਰਥ ਦਾਨ ਦਇਆ ਤਪ ਸੰਜਮ ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਨਹ ਏਕ ਪਛਾਨੈ ॥
ਪੂਰਨ ਜੋਤ ਜਗੈ ਘਟ ਮੈ ਤਬ ਖਾਲਸ ਤਾਹਿ ਨਖਾਲਸ ਜਾਨੈ ॥੧॥

Sri Mukh Vak Patshahi 10, Sawayya, Jagat Jot, *Dasam Granth*, p. 712.

13. Madanjit Kaur, "An Outline of Development of Sikhism And its Fundamental Concerns, in *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Vol. XII, No. 11, August 1985, pp. 9-10- Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.
14. The Unambiguous claim made for the order of the Khalsa by the Guru himself says :

ਪਾਇ ਗਹੇ ਜਬ ਤੇ ਤੁਮਰੇ
ਤਬ ਤੇ ਕੋਊ ਆਖ ਤਰੇ ਨਹੀ ਆਨਯੋ ॥
ਰਾਮ ਰਹੀਮ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਕੁਰਾਨ
ਅਨੇਕ ਕਹੈ ਮਤ ਏਕ ਨ ਮਾਨਯੋ ॥...
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਸਿਪਾਨ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਕਰਿ
ਮੈ ਨ ਕਹਯੋ ਸਭ ਤੋਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਯੋ ॥੮੬੩॥

Epilogue of Ram Avtar, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 254.

At another place the Guru ordains :

ਬੇਦ ਕਤੋਬ ਕੇ ਭੇਦ ਸਭੈ ਤਜਿ
ਕੇਵਲ ਕਾਲ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨਿਧ ਮਾਨਯੋ ॥

Sri Mukh Vak Patshahi 10, Sawayya, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. II, p. 715.

15. ਗੁਨੀਮੁਲ ਖਿਰਾਜ ਹੈ
ਗੁਰੀਬੁਲ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਹੈ ॥੧੫੨॥

'Jaap Sahib', *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 8.

16. ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਸਿਪਾਨ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਕਰਿ
ਮੈ ਨ ਕਹਯੋ ਸਭ ਤੋਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਯੋ ॥੮੬੩॥

'Swayyas' *Dasam Granth*, p. 254.

17. Sirdar Kapur Singh *Paras'arpras'na* (Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh), Eds. Piar Singh and Madanjit Kaur, Pub. Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1989, p. 37.

18. ਨਿਜ ਪੰਥ ਚਲਾਇਓ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਧਰਿ ਤੇਜ ਕਰਾਰਾ ॥

Varan Bhai Gurdas, Var 41, Pauri 15, p. 667.

19. ਇਹ ਖੜਗ ਕੇਤੁ ਬੁਰਕਾ ਸੁਜਾਨ ॥
ਜੋ ਦਯੋ ਚਹਤ ਕਰੁਣਾ ਵਿਧਾਨ ॥

ਇਹ ਆਦਿ ਅੰਤ ਏਕੋ ਸੁਪੰਥ ॥
ਗੁਰ ਰਚਯੋ ਜਗਤ ਕੋ ਦੇਨ ਸੰਥ ॥

Sukha Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi*, 10,
Anglo Sanskrit Press, Samvat 1969, p. 198.

20. ਜਬ ਲਗ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਹੇ ਨਿਆਰਾ ॥
ਤਬ ਲਗ ਤੇਜ ਦੀਓ ਮੈ ਸਾਰਾ ॥
ਜਬ ਇਹ ਗਹੈ ਬਿਖਰਨ ਕੀ ਗੀਤ ॥
ਮੈ ਨ ਕਰੋ ਇਨ ਕੀ ਪਰਤੀਤ ॥

Sarab Loh Granth.

21. *Gur Khalse Ji ke Rehat Name*, ed Shamsheer Singh Ashok, Sikh History Research Board, Amritsar. October 1970, unpublished, p. 47.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
24. *Gursobha*, p. 81.
25. ਜੁੱਧ ਜਿਤੇ ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥
ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੁ ਦਾਨ ਕਰੇ ॥
ਅਘ ਅਉਘ ਟਰੈ ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥
ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਫੁਨ ਧਾਮ ਭਰੇ ॥
ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੁ ਬਿੱਦਿਆ ਲਈ ॥
ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਸਭ ਸ਼ੱਤੁ ਮਰੇ ॥
ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕੇ ਸਜੇ ਹਮ ਹੈ ॥
ਨਹੀ ਮੋਸੇ ਗਰੀਬ ਕਰੋਰ ਪਰੇ ॥੨॥

'33 Swayyas', *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 1716.

26. William Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, New Delhi, Reprint 1971, Vol. I, p. 98.
For more details about the struggle of Banda Singh Bahadur see English translation of the Persian Sources Text nos. 11,12,1 and 14 in *Sikh History From Persian Sources*, ed. J.S. Grewal and Irfan Habib, Pub. Tulika, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 131-160. The most important source of information about Banda Singh Bahadur is Ganda Singh's *Banda Singh Bahadur* based on contemporary and original sources, Pub. Khalsa College, Amritsar, May, 1934.
27. See *Hukamnamas* of Banda Singh Bahadur in *Hukamname* (ed. Ganda Singh), Pub. Panjabi University, Patiala, 1967.
28. According to Irvine, at Lohgarh, Banda tried to assume something of a regal state. He was the *Sacha Padshah*, or the Veritable Sovereign, his disciples were all *Singhs*, or lions. A new form of greeting, *Fateh daras*

(*darshan*) meaning; may you behold victory was invented and coins were struck with the following inscriptions :

*Sikkah zad bar har do alam Tegh-i-Nanak wahib ast,
Fateh Gobind Shah-i-shahan fazl-i-Sacha Sahib ast.*

(Meaning thereby, the Victory belongs to Guru Gobind Singh, the King of kings, Coin struck in the two worlds, the Sword of Guru Nanak is the Granter of desires, by Grace he is the veritable Lord). On the reverse of the coins were inscribed these words :

*Zarb ba Aman-ud-dahr, Maswarat-shahr,
Zinat-ut-takht-i-mubarak bakht.*

(Meaning thereby, coined at Refuge of the World, the walled City, Ornament of the Fortunate Throne).

These were the titles and epithets assigned by him to Lohgarh, just as each imperial city had its appropriate honorific name.

see, *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, p. 110.

29. On his letters and official documents and edicts, Banda Singh Bahadur impressed a seal, bearing the following rhyming inscription :

*Tegh, deg, o fateh, nusrat-i-be-dirang,
Yaft az Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh.*

(Meaning thereby, Guru Gobind Singh found in Guru Nanak, Sword, pot (Prosperity), and conquest).

—*Irvine, op.cit.*, p. 110.

30. Amin-ud-Daula, *Ruqaat-i-Aminud Daula*, Letter iii, 1124-1131 A.H. C.A.D. 1712-1719. The MS, is also called *Dastur-ul-Insha* of Yar Muhammad, as quoted by Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 84.
31. The carnage began on 5th March, 1716, opposite the *Chhabutra Kotwali*, in the space now attached to the Harding Library. One hundred Sikhs were executed everyday. Life was promised to anyone who would renounce his faith and become a Mohammedan, but to the last, say Surman and Stephenson, who were then in Delhi, 'it has not been found that one apostatised from this new formed religion'—See Letter dated March 10, 1716, written by John Surman and Edward Stephenson, members of the British Embassy to the court of Farruk Siyar and addressed to the President and Governor of Fort William. It is published in J.T. Wheeler's *Early Records of British India*, London 1878, p. 180 and in C.R. Wilson's *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, Calcutta, 1900, pp. 96-98, *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, ed. Ganda Singh, Pub. Indian Studies Past And Present, Calcutta, 1962, p. 49. See also Khafi Khan, *Muntakhib-ul-Lubab*, A.H. 1134 (A.D. 1722), Asiatic

Society of Bengal, Bibliotheca Indica, 1874, Vol. II, p. 766—as quoted by Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *op.cit.*, pp. 95-96.

32. ਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੀ ਆਗਯਾ ਪਾਇ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਭਯੋ ਰੂਪ ਮੁਨਿਵਰ ਕੋ ॥

Sarab Loh Granth, Vol. II, p. 495.

ਪੰਥ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਯੋ ਪੁਨੀਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਆਰਯਾ ਕਰਿ ਉਦਿਤ ਭਯੋ ॥

Ibid., p. 496.

ਖਾਲਸਾ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੀ ਫੌਜ ॥

ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿਓ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮ ਕੀ ਮੌਜ ॥

Sarab Loh Granth.

See also Prahlad Singh's *Rehatnama*, which records the statement as :

ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੀ ਮੂਰਤ ਬੋਹਾ ॥

ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿ ਅਕਾਲ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਦੇਹ ॥

—*Ibid.*, p. 58.

Bhai Gurdas 2nd also testifies :

ਗੁਰਬਰ ਅਕਾਲ ਕੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਸੋ ਉਪਜਿਓ ਬਿਗਿਆਨਾ ॥

ਤਬ ਸਹਿਜੇ ਰਚਿਓ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਾਬਤ ਮਰਦਾਨਾ ॥

(By the order of the Immortal God the Great Guru obtained inspiration. Then he gradually established the *Khalsa* whole bodied and manly).

Varan Bhai Gurdas, Var 41, Pauri 16, p. 667.

33. ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਜੋ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਤਿਆਗੇ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਲੜੇ ਹੋਇ ਆਗੈ ॥੮੮॥
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਜੋ ਪੰਚ ਕੋ ਮਾਰੈ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਕਰਮ ਕੋ ਸਾੜੈ ॥੮੯॥
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਮਾਨ ਜੋ ਤਿਆਗੈ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਜੋ ਪਰਤੀਆ ਤੇ ਭਾਗੈ ॥੯੦॥
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਪਰਦੁਸ਼ਟਿ ਕੋ ਤਿਆਗੈ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਨਾਮ ਰਤ ਲਾਗੈ ॥੯੧॥
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਹਿਤ ਲਾਇ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਸਾਰ ਮੁੰਹਿ ਖਾਇ ॥੯੨॥

... ..
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਨਿਰਧਨ ਕੋ ਪਾਲੈ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਦੁਸ਼ਟ ਕੋ ਗਾਲੈ ॥੯੩॥
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਨਾਮ ਜਪ ਕਰੈ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਮਲੇਫ ਪਰ ਚੜ੍ਹੈ ॥੯੪॥
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਨਾਮ ਸਿਉ ਜੋੜੈ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਬੰਧਨ ਕੋ ਤੋੜੈ ॥੯੫॥
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਜੋ ਚੜ੍ਹੇ ਭੁਰੰਗ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਜੋ ਕਰੇ ਨਿਤ ਜੰਗ ॥੯੬॥

ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਸਸਤਰ ਕੋ ਧਾਰੈ
ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਦੁਸ਼ਟ ਕੋ ਮਾਰੈ ॥੫੪॥

'Tankhahnama' Bhai Nand Lal in *Bhai Nand Lal Granthavli*, Ed. Ganda Singh, Malaka, Malaysia, 1968, pp. 198-199.

34. Madanjit Kaur, 'An outline of the Development of Sikhism', *Journal of Sikh Studies*, op.cit., p. 11.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Charles Elliot Sir, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1954, Vol. II, p. 267.
37. ਸੰਤ ਸਬੂਹਨ ਕੇ ਸੁਖ ਦੀਆ ॥

—Bachitar Natak, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 183.

Sukha Singh also confirms these ideas :

ਤੁਮ ਸਰਣੀ ਖਾਲਸ ਕੀ ਆਵੈ ॥
ਸਗਲ ਧਰਨ ਇਹ ਰਾਜ ਕਮਾਵੈ ॥

... ..

Gurbilas Patshahi 10, ed. Gursharn Kaur Jaggi, Pub. Bhasha Vibhag Punjab, 2nd Edition, p. 182.

ਮੈ ਇਨਕੇ ਸਿਰ ਪਰ ਕਰ ਧਾਰਿਯੋ ।
ਰਾਜ ਜੋਗ ਆਸਨ ਬੈਠਾਹਿਯੋ ।

Ibid., pp. 82.

ਸਗਲ ਧਰਨ ਹੋਸੀ ਇਨ ਹਯਤ ।
ਜਹ ਤਹ ਹਮਰੀ ਅਹੀ ਜਮਯਤ ।

Ibid., p. 183.

ਅਵਰ ਪੰਥ ਜਗ ਜਿਤਕ ਭਣੀਜੈ ॥
ਦੇਵ ਦੈਤ ਬਰ ਨਰਨ ਗਣੀਜੈ ॥
ਇਹ ਤੋ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਸਧੁਜ ਕੇ ਪੰਥਾ ॥
ਦੈ ਹੈ ਸਗਲ ਜਗਤ ਕਹ ਸੇਥਾ ॥

... ..

ਤਾਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸੁ ਸੁ ਪੰਥ ਭਯੋ ਜਗ ਰੂਪ ਅਨੁਪ ਮਹਾਂ ਸੁਖਦਾਈ ।

Ibid., p. 185.

DEFINITION OF THE KHALSA

K*halsa* is a Perso-Turkish Administrative term borrowed from the Arabic language. It has its roots in the Arabic word *Khalis* which means- free from impurities, adulterations or any kind of interpolation; it also means- pure; office of revenue department; the land or estates which belongs directly to the king without any inter-mediary claim of a noble, feudal or farmer; directly under government management; royal; sovereign; army directly administered by the sovereign or crown prince; or answerable to no subordinate. The term *Khalsa* was used during the Turkish and *Mughal* rule in India mostly for crown lands administered directly by the king without the mediation of *jagirdars* or *mansabdars*. '*Khalsa*' was the term implying the monarch's personal estates. For a long period of centuries Persian remained the official language in India. It became a medium of interaction between the ruling classes and the subject people. Consequently, a fair amount of vocabulary of this language permeated the local languages. These words were popularly used and soon became a part of Indian culture as well.

The term *Khalsa* was used both in its homogeneous and exogenous forms. The homogeneous form which is *khalis* was often used to denote purity of non-living articles. But when the term was used for humans, it was generally used in its exogenous form. In context of a certain person or an individual or a personality, the term *khalis* was meant to denote an integrated personality or a

person free from all disdainful habits, behavioural weakness and blemishes etc.

In the Sikh parlance the term *Khalsa* is used collectively for the community of baptised Sikhs. But the definition of the term *Khalsa* as given by Guru Gobind Singh himself means 'wholly pure', guaranteed, pure person who has enshrined the 'Pure One' (God) in his heart. However, the usage of the word *Khalsa* has been current in spiritual vocabulary of the *Sant Bhakha* since long. Bhagat Kabir has used this term in his *bani* (devotional compositions) for all those - including himself, who had known the art of Divine Love and Divine Bhakti.

Kabir says : Such of God's servants have become God's own (*Khalsa*)

As of loving devotion have realization.¹

This reference of the term *Khalsa* in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* refers to a person of exalted spiritual status.

The same mode of devotee's relationship with the 'Divine' has been again expressed by Kabir as :

Lo! I have mounted to the Lord's Throne,
and met with the Lord of the Universe,
And I have become one with my God (Ram),
and no one can tell who is who.²

An identical Arabic word interchangeable with '*Khalsa*' occurs in the *bani* of Bhagat Ravidas. It is *Khalaas*, which means free, unbounded, pure, unfettered. Bhagat Ravidas pronounced his spiritual liberation as following :

Sayeth Ravi Das, the cobbler, freed from all bonds,
restraints of caste (etc. are implied, which would
not apply to him as a saint) and having established
direct relations with the Divine.³

The term *Khalaas* also appears in the *bani* of the fifth Guru, Sri Guru Arjan Dev which indicates the blessed status of a devotee directly linked with God :

Blessed are those among mankind whom the Lord
to Himself has attached.⁴

Subsequently the term *Khalsa* came to be used for a Sikh or a *sangat* directly linked with Guru.

In the Sikh tradition, the term *Khalsa* appears for the first time in one of the *Hukamnamas* (edicts, written orders, letters or epistles) issued by the sixth Guru of the Sikhs, Sri Guru Hargobind (1595-1644) where a *sangat* (local congregation) of the eastern region has been described as *Guru Ka Khalsa* (Guru's own or Guru's special charge)⁵

The term *Khalsa* has also been employed in the same sense in one of the *Hukamnamas* of the ninth Guru of the Sikhs, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-75) addressed to the *sangat* of Patna.⁶

The word '*Khalsa*' was also used by some religious sects like Dadupanthis and Vaishnavite Bairagis. The term '*Khalsa*' however acquired a specific connotation after Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) abolished the *masand* system (the Sikh missionary set up) which had degenerated and declared the creation of the *Khalsa* on the famous Baisakhi Day (30 March) of the year 1699 at Anandpur Sahib. At this occasion, Guru Gobind Singh appeared before the grand assembly of the Sikhs and declared his demand for five disciples who were ready to sacrifice their head at the call of their Guru. At this commandment five Sikhs responded one after another and advanced to offer their heads. All the five were welcomed by the Guru as *Panj Piaras* (the five beloved ones). On this occasion, Guru Gobind Singh introduced a new form of initiation - *Amrit* - called *Khande de pahul* (Nectar stirred by double edged broadsword). After the initiation of the *Panj Piaras*, Guru Gobind Singh himself took *Amrit* from them in the same manner. Then the rest of the Sikhs were baptized. Sikhs so initiated on that Baisakhi day were collectively designated as '*Khalsa*' - the commonwealth of brotherhood who belonged to *Waheguru* (the Supreme Lord). By the creation of the *Khalsa* the Guru established the casteless fraternity where every member enjoyed equal status, similar a distinct and similar outer identity (five *kakkars*), the surname of *Singh* (lion) irrespective of their caste, creed, race or ethnic

differences. The creation of the *Khalsa* was hailed as a great victory. The phrase announced at this occasion declared :

Waheguru Ji ka Khalsa

Waheguru Ji ki Fateh.

[Hail to the *Khalsa* who belongs to the Lord God!

Hail to the Lord God to whom belongs the Victory]⁷

This phrase has become a part of the Sikh salutation. With the creation of the *Khalsa* thereby a direct relationship between the Sikhs and Gurus was established permanently. The term *Khalsa* is used more frequently in the *Hukamnamas* of Guru Gobind Singh after the creation of the *Khalsa*.⁸ Before the creation of the *Khalsa*, the Sikh *sangats* spread in various places in India and outside countries had the status of *sehlang*⁹ (meaning linked with the Guru through the mediacacy of a *masand*) or it stood for the position and management of the affairs of the Sikh *sangats* as associated with the *masands* of their areas and it meant Sikh community of that *sangat* linked with the Guru through a *masand*. On account of the deterioration of the institution of the *masands*, Guru Gobind Singh abolished it and established direct association with all the *sangats* and the Sikhs. Therefore they are addressed as the *Khalsa* of the Guru, meaning directly linked and associated with the Guru. Sainapat, a contemporary poet enjoying the patronage of Guru Gobind Singh, in his book *Sri Gur Sobha* relates how some Sikhs, when questioned - how they had become *Khalsa* because '*Khalsa*' was a term related to the King of Delhi, replied that their Guru by removing his former *naibs* (deputies) called *masands* had made all Sikhs his *Khalsa*.¹⁰

Masands were the agents or representatives of the Sikh Guru; the holder of *manjis*, the Sikh priests appointed from the time of Guru Amar Das onwards to exercise spiritual authority on behalf of the Guru, to receive offerings from the Sikhs and to preach *Sikhism* in designated areas. Later on the *masands* became corrupt and they began to usurp the offerings received from the devotees and behaved independently regardless of the central authority of the Guru. Consequently they were disowned and suppressed by Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru condemned and rejected them and warned

his Sikhs about the vices of the *masands* as :

They are inhuman, they rob the innocent people
and never sing the praise of the Lord.¹¹

Thereby, Guru Gobind Singh cleaned the infrastructure of the Sikh organisation and rejected unwanted and corrupt elements and rejuvenated the Sikh solidarity on a strong footing by establishing the order of the *Khalsa*. The first hand documentary evidence of the fact are the *Hukamnamas* of Guru Gobind Singh issued to various Sikh *sangats* after the creation of the *Khalsa* (March 1699) which clearly instruct the Sikhs not to have any contact with the *masands* and to deposit the *kar bheta* (offerings) to the Guru directly by *hundi* (bill of exchange) or through *mewrah* (postman or courier). These *hukamnamas* are dated and carry the *nesan* (signature) of Guru Gobind Singh.¹²

The order of the *Khalsa* from its birth has claimed the status of a new way of life, a separate community and people with distinct identity committed to a specific code of conduct (*rehat maryada*) and mission of life. The significance of the *Khande de pahul* was further enhanced by the exhortation of Guru Gobind Singh to his *Khalsa*, bidding them to take up the sword of divine knowledge in hand and destroy the illusion and ignorance of mind from the very roots and to sweep away the filth of timidity. The qualities of the *Khalsa* were eulogised by Guru Gobind Singh as :

Blessed is he who remains imbued with the
Name of the Lord and keeps his innerself everready,
to engage in battle with evil propensities.
One must first understand that this body is subject to decay.
Hence the time given by the Almighty
should be used in meritorious deeds.
So one sails across the world
on the boat of glory.
This body which makes fortitude,
its abode is enlightened with the lamp of wisdom.
It is almost as if catching hold
of the broom of knowledge, one is sweeping out
the weeds of helplessness scattered (all around)¹³

Guru Gobind Singh considered *Khalsa* as his special form. The Guru himself proclaimed :

The *Khalsa* is my determinate form
I am immanent in the *Khalsa*.¹⁴

Guru Gobind Singh described *Khalsa* as his most cherished desire and blessed it with the boon of immortality.¹⁵ The Guru invested the *Khalsa* with the spirit of purity.¹⁶ Guru Gobind Singh describes the special features of the *Khalsa*. That the right of one's beliefs and the right to worship was the primary duty of the *Khalsa* as is evident from the *Sawayya* of the Guru which makes explicit reference to the *Khalsa* :

He is recognised as a pure member of the *Khalsa*
in whose heart shines the Light of God;
Who recognises only the One God and not pilgrimages,
alms, non-destruction of life, penances or austerities;
who repeats the name of God day and night and
bestows all his thought on one God whose Light is
unquenchable.¹⁷

The *Khalsa* was committed to 'die in order to live'. The Guru pronounced that religious dispensation can face any critical situation and grave challenge if it accepts God as death. In fact in his verses Guru Gobind Singh equated 'Death with Sword'.¹⁸

The dictum of the Guru to the *Khalsa* about the grace and attributes of the Supreme Reality is :

God destroys the enemies of the righteous
God is compassionate to the poor,
He is the cherisher of the lowly.¹⁹

The *Khalsa* was always treated with great regard and consideration by the Guru. Guru Gobind Singh acknowledges his gratitude and also expresses his wish to do everything for the sake of his beloved *Khalsa* :

All the battles I have won against tyranny,
I have fought with the devoted backing of these people.
Through them only I have been able to bestow gifts,

through their help I have escaped from harm.
 The love and generosity of the *Khalsa* has enriched
 my heart and my home. Through their grace,
 I have attained all learning, through their help in battle,
 I have slain all my enemies. I was born to serve them.
 Through them I reached eminence. What would
 I have been without their kind and ready help.
 There are millions of insignificant people like me.
 True service is the service of these people.
 I am not inclined to serve others.
 Charity will bear fruit in this and the
 next world only if given to such worthy people as these.
 All other sacrifices and charities are profitless.
 From top to toe, whatever I call my own,
 all I possess and carry, I dedicate to these people.²⁰

The commonwealth of the '*Khalsa*' was founded on the basis of all round equality and total dedication to One Supreme Reality. The *Panj Piaras* belonged to five different *varnas* (castes) and five different geographical regions. Three of them belonged to the so-called low castes. They were raised to the same platform and were united into one social entity, an egalitarian horizontal social structure by promulgation of the *Nash* (negation) doctrine-*Kritinash*, *Kulnash*, *Dharamnash* and *Karamnash*. Their devotion to the sword was to be regarded as an act of the highest merit which would bring them power and prosperity in this life and bliss in the next. Which means total destruction and complete break from previous affiliation to caste, creed, customs, beliefs, practices, rituals, rites, ceremonies, convictions, institutions and tradition whether social, economic or religious. Guru Gobind Singh enjoined his *Khalsa* to forget all the pluralistic religious beliefs preached by the *Vedas* and *Kateb* and other religious texts but to worship the, *Akal*; The Timeless God.²¹

The '*Khalsa*' was inculcated with a global vision and a humanitarian attitude. The most important concern of the *Khalsa* was a concrete programme of social integration of caste ridden pluralistic India segmented into complex factions and shackled in slavery, despair and inertia. Guru Gobind Singh created a distinct

breed of warriors - *Khalsa* as *sant sipahi* (saint-soldier) attuned to the Will of God (*Hukam*) having spiritual potentialities and physical vigour to meet out the challenges of life in every situation and remain ever ready to sacrifice his life for the cause of truth, justice, righteousness, oppressed and weak without considering any discrimination of caste, creed, nationality and cultural barriers. The popular saying about the heroic adventure of Guru Gobind Singh is remembered as :

*Sawa lakh se ek laraon,
Chirion se mai baz turaon,
tabhe Gobind Singh name kahaon*²²

The motto was to serve the suffering humanity for love of God and treat all mankind as equal children of the same God. The Guru pronounced his *Khalsa* to forget all outer distinctions — racial, linguistic, geographical, ethnic, economic, social and religious and realize all humanity as one:

Let all human beings understand,
that they belong to one and the same caste.
I recognise none but the one God.
There is no duality.
Except in the protection of the One Sole God,
nowhere is salvation.
The temple and the mosque are the same as places of worship
the Hindu and the Muslim form of worship
are for the same God.
All men are the same, although they appear
different under different local influences.
The fair and the dark, the ugly and the beautiful;
The Hindus and the Muslims have
developed themselves,
according to the conditions of different countries.
All have the same build -
Compound of the same five elements.
The *Puranas* and *Quran* are the same
and they proclaim in essence the same message.²³

With his ideology and spiritual endowment Guru Gobind Singh

transformed ordinary people into brave warriors. The resurgence of the Sikh community into *Khalsa* was an event of great historical significance and far reaching consequences. However, the acclamation of the *Khalsa* was a hard credit. Guru Gobind Singh in a very categorical terms enjoined upon the *Khalsa* to observe discipline and to guard their distinct identity carefully. The Guru warned his followers that his relationship with the *Khalsa* is subject to their adherence to this binding :

The *Khalsa* shall continue to be blessed with
all my powers (and blessings)
So long as it preserves its identity and uniqueness.
But the moment, the Sikh take to Brahminical path
I would not stand by them.²⁴

Guru Gobind Singh, at the time of his departure from this mortal world, conferred 'Guruship' itself upon *Khalsa* alongwith the holy *Guru Granth Sahib* as the Guide and Guru for the Sikhs. Bhai Nand Lal, court poet and a great Persian Scholar of his time has defined in detail the attributes and essentials traits of the *Khalsa*.²⁵ During the eighteenth century the volunteer force organised by the Sikhs against the tyranny of the oppression of the Mughal rulers was known as *Dal Khalsa* (literally meaning the *Khalsa* army). Even the government and court of *Sher-e-Punjab*; Maharaja Ranjit (1780-1839) was called *Darbar Khalsa* or *Sarkar Khalsa Ji*.²⁶

In Sikh historical, religious and literary sources of the late eighteenth; nineteenth and early twentieth centuries including the collection of *Dasam Granth*; *Rehatnamas* and composition of *Sarab Loh Granth*, *Prem Sumarag* and various texts of *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*, *Gur Pratap Suraj Granth*, *Prachin Panth Prakash* and *Panth Prakash*; the term *Khalsa* is repeatedly extolled as composed of men of excellent moral equality, committed to fight for social justice; destruction of evil and oppression and defend liberty and freedom.

A perfect combination of spiritual fervour and heroism committed to secular and spiritual realms of life—this type of righteous man—a *Sant Sipahi* (saint soldier) called *Khalsa*; earned

a new vocabulary during the period of their persecution and martyrdom (1721-1748) when the Sikhs were declared outlaws by the fanatic Mughal Government. Prices were fixed on their heads. They had no hearths, no homes, no property; they lived in jungles (Lakhi jungles and other hide outs), but they faced the challenge with courage and a temperament which made nothing of misery, but added to their strength and they often made light of their spirit by tracking jokes about it.²⁷ They lived in the hope prophesised by Guru Gobind Singh, that one day the *Khalsa* would rule. The *Khalsa* established political rule in Punjab (1761) which lasted till the annexation of the Punjab (after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh) in 1849 under his minor successor Maharaja Duleep Singh.

The tradition of *Khalsa*'s desire for the right of just rule and self-sovereignty has a long history, beginning from the times of Guru Gobind Singh and now permanently enshrined in the daily prayer *Ardas* of the Sikhs. Bhai Nand Lal is the first scholar who has recorded the *Khalsa* seeking the Bliss of liberty and sovereignty from the Almighty Lord. He records :

*Raj Karega Khalsa aaki rahe na koe
khawar hoe sabh milenge bache saran jo hoe*²⁸

In the present context the term *Khalsa* stands for an *Amritdhari* Sikh (baptised Sikh). Generally, a Sikh is also addressed as *Khalsa*. But in the real essence the term *Khalsa* reflects the integrity of an individual personality of a trustworthy and reliable baptised (*Amritdhari*) Sikh. According to *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, the words *Khalsa Ji* are also used loosely for addressing a group of Singhs or *Amritdhari* Sikhs or Singhs. However, it is more appropriate to use the term for the entire community or a representative gathering of it such as *Khalsa Panth* or *Sarbat Khalsa*. The *Khalsa* in this context implies the collective, spirituality—directed will of the community guided by the *Guru Granth Sahib*.²⁹ But it is implicit that a *Khalsa* is bound to be a baptised Sikh in compliance with its definition.

Notes and References:

1. ਕਹੁ ਕਬੀਰ ਜਨ ਭਏ ਖਾਲਸੇ
ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਭਗਤਿ ਜਿਹ ਜਾਨੀ ॥
Rag Sorath, Kabir, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 654.
2. ਅਬ ਤਉ ਜਾਇ ਚਢੇ ਸਿੰਘਸਨਿ
ਮਿਲੇ ਹੈ ਸਾਰੰਗਪਾਨੀ ॥
ਰਾਮ ਕਬੀਰਾ ਏਕ ਭਏ ਹੈ
ਕੋਇ ਨ ਸਕੈ ਪਛਾਨੀ ॥
—Ibid., p. 969.
3. ਕਹਿ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਖਲਾਸ ਚਮਾਰਾ ॥
Rag Gauri Ravidas, Ibid., 345.
4. ਜਿਨ ਕੋ ਸਾਧੂ ਭੋਟੀਐ ਸੋ ਦਰਗਹ ਹੋਇ ਖਲਾਸੁ ॥
Barah Mahan, Majh, M5, Ibid., p. 134.
5. ਪੂਰਬ ਦੀ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹੋਇ ॥
—Hukamname, ed. Ganda Singh, Pub. Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967, p. 67.
6. ਪਟਣ ਦੀ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀਉ ਦਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹੈ ॥
—Hukamname, ed. Ganda Singh, Pub. Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967, p. 77.
7. ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ
ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹਿ ॥
8. See *Hukamname*, Ed. Ganda Singh, pp. 157, 159, 161, 165, 167, 169, 171, 173, 175, 177, 179, 181.
9. The word *sahlang* occurs in the compositions of Guru Amar Das and Guru Ram Das, as pointed out by Ganda Singh (ed), *Makhaz-i-Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*, Pub., Sikh History Society, Amritsar, 1949. The term also occurs in the *Vars* of Bhai Gurdas, see *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, ed. Bhai Vir Singh, Pub. Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 1972, *Var 12, Pauri 8*; and *Var 26, Pauri 25* which stands for a devotee or *sangat* linked with the Guru through a *masand*. See also J.S. Grewal, Introduction, *Sikh History From Persian Sources*, ed. J.S. Grewal and Irfan Habib, Pub. Tulika, Indian History Congress, 2001.
10. ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਪਤਿ ਸੋਈ
ਕਹਤ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਤਾਂ ਕੋ ਹੋਈ ।
ਤੁਮੋ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਕਿਆ ਮਤਿ ਧਾਰਾ ।
ਸੋ ਬਿਧਿ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੋਚ ਵਿਚਾਰਾ ।
ਤਬ ਸਿਖਨ ਯਹ ਬਾਤ ਬਤਾਈ ।
ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪੁਰਖ ਮਹਾ ਸੁਖਦਾਈ ।

ਆਗੈ ਜਿਨ ਕੈ ਨਾਇਬ ਹੋਤੇ ।

ਨਾਵ ਮਸੰਦ ਸਗਲ ਥੇ ਜੇਤੇ ।

ਸੋ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀਏ ਦੂਰਿ ਸਬ ਪਰਮ ਜੋਤਿ ਨਿਜ ਧਾਰਿ ।

ਸਗਲ ਸਿਖ ਭਏ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੁਨੀਐ ਸਾਚ ਬਿਚਾਰ ॥

—Sainapat, *Sri Gursobha*, ed. Ganda Singh, Pub. Punjabi University, Patiala, 1996, pp. 99-100.

11. ਲੂਟਤ ਹੈ ਪਸੁ ਲੋਗਨ ਕੋ

ਕਬਹੂੰ ਨ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ ਕੇ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਵੈ ॥

—Sri Mukh Vak Patshahi 10, 33 Sawayya, Sawayya I, Jagat Jot, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 716.

12. See *Hukamname*, ed., Ganda Singh, Pub. Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967, pp. 157, 159, 161.

13. ਧੰਨ ਜੀਓ ਤਿਹ ਕੋ ਜਗ ਮੈ

ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਚਿੱਤ ਮੈ ਜੁਧੁ ਬਿਚਾਰੈ ॥

ਦੇ ਹਅਨਿੱਤ ਨ ਨਿੱਤ ਰਹੈ

ਜਸੁ ਨਾਵ ਚੜੈ ਭਵਸਾਗਰ ਤਾਰੈ ।

ਧੀਰਜ ਧਾਮ ਬਨਾਇ ਇਹੈ

ਤਨ ਬੁੱਧਿ ਸੁ ਦੀਪਕ ਜਿਉ ਉਜੀਆਰੈ ।

ਗਿਯਾਨਹਿ ਕੀ ਬਢਨੀ ਮਨਹੁ ਹਾਥ ਲੈ

ਕਾਤਰਤਾ ਕੁਤਵਾਰ ਬੁਹਾਰੈ ।

—Krishan Avtar, *Dasam Granth*, p. 570.

14. ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਖਾਸ

ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮਹਿ ਹਉ ਕਰਉ ਨਿਵਾਸ ॥

—Sarab Loh Granth.

15. ਸਰਬ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਆਦਿ ਅੰਤਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ।

—Sainapat, *Gursobha*, p. 81.

16. ਖਾਲਸ ਸਰੂਪ । ਅਨੂਪ ਰੂਪ ।

—*Ibid.*, p. 87.

17. ਜਾਗਤਿ ਜੋਤ ਜਪੈ ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸੁਰ

ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਮਨ ਨੈਕ ਨ ਆਨੈ ॥

ਪੂਰਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਸਜੈ

ਬ੍ਰਤ ਗੋਰ ਮਝੀ ਮਟ ਭੂਲ ਨ ਮਾਨੈ ॥

ਤੀਰਥ ਦਾਨ ਦਇਆ ਤਪ ਸੰਜਮ

ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਨਹ ਏਕ ਪਛਾਨੈ ॥

ਪੂਰਨ ਜੋਤ ਜਗੈ ਘਟ ਮੈ

ਤਬ ਖਾਲਸ ਤਾਹਿ ਨਖਾਲਸ ਜਾਨੈ ।

—Sri Mukh Vak Patashahi 10, Sawwaya 2, *Dasam Granth*, Vol I, p. 712.

18. ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਸਿਪਾਨ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਕਰਿ
ਮੈ ਨ ਕਹਯੋ ਸਭ ਤੋਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਯੋ
—Sri Mukh Vak Patshahi 10, Sawayya, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 254.

19. ਗ਼ਨੀਮੁਲ ਖਿਰਾਜ ਹੈਂ
ਗ਼ਰੀਬੁਲ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਹੈਂ ।

—Jaap Sahib, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 8.

20. ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੁ ਬਿੰਦਿਆ ਲਈ
ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਸਭ ਖੋਤੁ ਮਰੇ ॥
ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕੇ ਸਜੇ ਹਮ ਹੈਂ
ਨਹੀ ਮੋਸੋ ਗ਼ਰੀਬ ਕਰੋਰ ਪਰੇ ॥
ਸੇਵ ਕਰੀ ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਭਾਵਤ
ਅਉਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ ਸੁਹਾਤ ਨ ਜੀਕੋ
ਦਾਨ ਦਯੋ ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੋ ਭਲੋ
ਅਰੁ ਆਨ ਕੋ ਦਾਨ ਨ ਲਾਗਤ ਨੀਕੋ ॥
ਆਗੈ ਫਲੈ ਇਨਹੀ ਕੋ ਦਯੋ
ਜਗ ਮੈ ਜਸੁ ਅਉਰ ਦਯੋ ਸਭ ਫੀਕੋ ॥
ਮੋ ਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਮੈ ਮਨ ਤੇ ਤਨ ਤੇ
ਸਿਰ ਲਉ ਧਨਹੋ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੋ ॥

—Shabad Hazare, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 716.

21. ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਕੇ ਭੇਦ ਸਭੈ
ਤਜਿ ਕੇਵਲ ਕਾਲ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨਿਧ ਮਾਨਯੋ ॥

—Sri Mukh Vak Patshahi 10, Sawayya, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 715.

22. ਸਵਾ ਲਾਖ ਸੇ ਏਕ ਲੜਾਉਂ
ਚਿੜਾਉਂ ਸੇ ਮੈਂ ਬਾਜ ਤੁੜਾਉਂ
ਤਬੈ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਮ ਕਹਾਉਂ ॥

—Popular saying of Guru Gobind Singh.

23. ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਬੋ ॥
ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰੀਮ ਸੋਈ ਰਾਜਕ ਰਹੀਮ ਓਈ
ਦੂਸਰੋ ਨ ਭੇਦ ਕੋਈ ਭੂਲ ਭ੍ਰਮ ਮਾਨਬੋ ॥
ਏਕ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ ਸਭਹੀ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਏਕ
ਏਕ ਹੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੈ ਜੋਤ ਜਾਨਬੋ ॥
ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਮਸੀਤ ਸੋਈ ਪੂਜਾ ਔ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਓਈ
ਮਾਨਸ ਸਭੈ ਏਕ ਪੈ ਅਨੇਕ ਕੋ ਭ੍ਰਮਾਉ ਹੈ ॥
ਦੇਵਤਾ ਅਦੇਵ ਜੱਛ ਗੰਧਬ ਤੁਰਕ ਹਿੰਦੂ
ਨਯਾਰੇ ਨਯਾਰੇ ਦੇਸਨ ਕੇ ਭੇਸ ਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਉ ਹੈ ॥
ਏਕੈ ਨੈਨ ਏਕੈ ਕਾਨ ਏਕੈ ਦੇਹ ਏਕੈ ਬਾਨ
ਖਾਕ ਬਾਦ ਆਤਮ ਔ ਆਬ ਕੋ ਰਲਾਉ ਹੈ
ਅਲਹ ਅਭੇਖ ਸੋਈ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਔ ਕੁਰਾਨ ਓਈ
ਏਕ ਹੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਭੈ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਬਨਾਉ ਹੈ ॥

—*Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 19.

24. ਜਬ ਲਗ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਹੇ ਨਿਯਾਰਾ ॥
 ਤਬ ਲਗ ਤੇਜ ਦੀਓ ਮੈ ਸਾਰਾ ॥
 ਜਬ ਇਹ ਗਹੈ ਬਿਪਰਨ ਕੀ ਰੀਤ ॥
 ਮੈ ਨ ਕਰੋ ਇਨ ਕੀ ਪਰਤੀਤ ॥

—Sarab Loh Granth

25. Bhai Nand Lal in his *Tankhahnama* records :

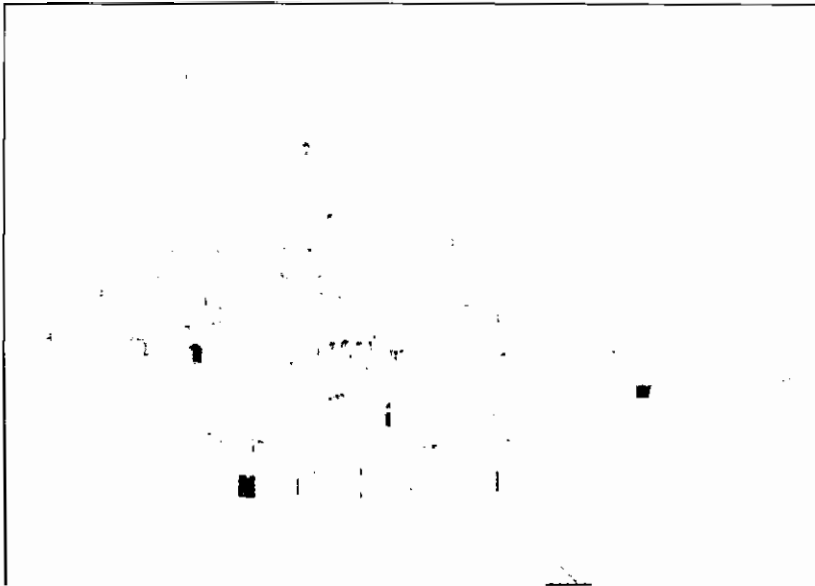
ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਜੋ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਤਿਆਗੈ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਲੜੇ ਹੋਇ ਆਗੈ ॥੪੪॥
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਜੋ ਪੰਚ ਕੋ ਮਾਰੈ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਕਰਮ ਕੋ ਸਾੜੈ ॥੪੫॥
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਮਾਨ ਜੋ ਤਿਆਗੈ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਜੋ ਪਰਤ੍ਰੀਆ ਤੇ ਭਾਗੈ ॥੪੬॥
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਪਰਦ੍ਰੁਸ਼ਟਿ ਕੋ ਤਿਆਗੈ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਨਾਮ ਰਤ ਲਾਗੈ ॥੪੭॥
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਹਿਤ ਲਾਇ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਸਾਰ ਮੁੰਹਿ ਖਾਇ ॥੪੮॥
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਨਿਰਧਨ ਕੋ ਪਾਲੈ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਦੁਸ਼ਟ ਕੋ ਗਾਲੈ ॥੪੯॥
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਨਾਮ ਜਪ ਕਰੈ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਮਲੇਛ ਪਰ ਚੜ੍ਹੈ ॥੫੦॥
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਨਾਮ ਸਿਉ ਜੋੜੈ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਬੰਧਨ ਕੋ ਤੋੜੈ ॥੫੧॥
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਜੋ ਚੜ੍ਹੇ ਤੁਰੰਗ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਜੋ ਕਰੇ ਨਿਤ ਜੰਗ ॥੫੨॥
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਸ਼ਸਤਰ ਕੋ ਧਾਰੈ
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਇ ਦੁਸ਼ਟ ਕੋ ਮਾਰੈ ॥੫੩॥

—Bhai Nand Lal Granthavali, 'Tankhahnama Bhai Nanad Lal', Ed.
 by Ganda Singh, Pub. Malaka, Malaysia, 1968, pp. 198-199.

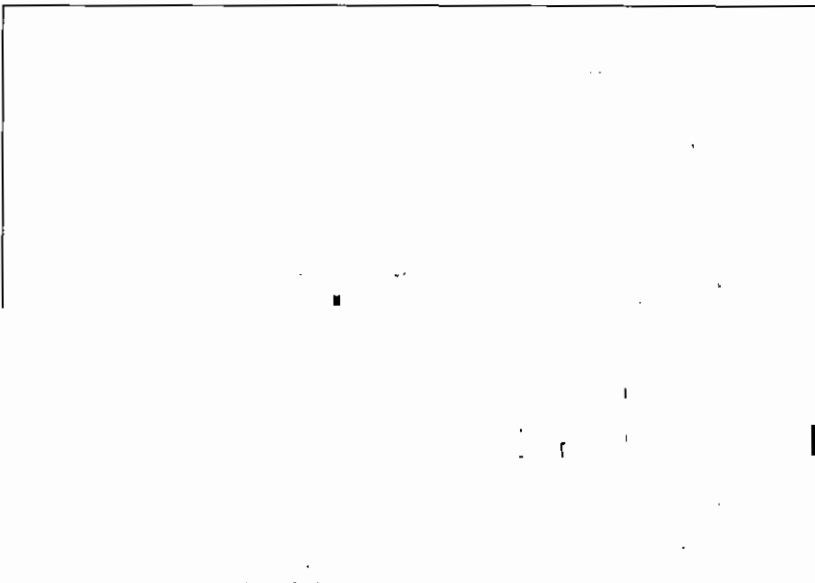
26. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs, Vol. I : 1469-1839*, Pub. Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1977, p. 201.
27. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of The Sikhs*, Vol. I, (1469-1767), Pub. by Punjabi University, Patiala, 1989, pp. 111.
28. The couplet reads that it was the destiny of the *Khalsa* to rule :
 ਰਾਜ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਆਕੀ ਰਹੇ ਨਾ ਕੋਇ
 ਖੁਰ ਹੋਇ ਸਭ ਮਿਲੇਗੇ ਬਚੇ ਸਰਨ ਜੋ ਹੋਇ ॥੬੨॥

—Bhai Nand Lal Granthavali, Ed. by Ganda Singh, 1968,
 'Tankhahnama', p. 199.

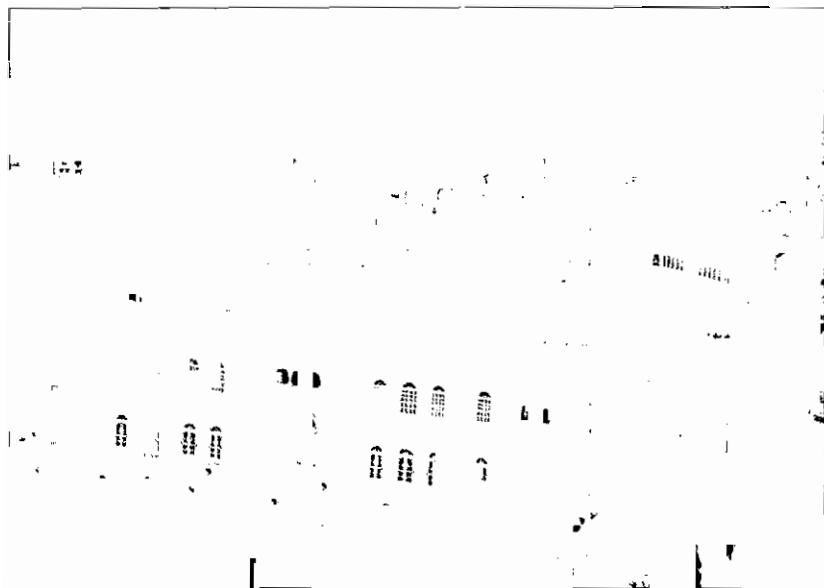
29. *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Editor-in-Chief, Professor Harbans Singh, Vol. II, Pub. Punjabi University, Patiala, 1996, p. 474.



Takhat Sri Harmandir Sahib, Patna, Bihar
(Birth place of Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji)



Gurdwara Bal Lila, Patna, Bihar (In his childhood (Guru) Gobind Rai used to play here in the palace of Raja Fateh Chand Maini. His Rani who was issueless treated Gobind Rai as her own son).



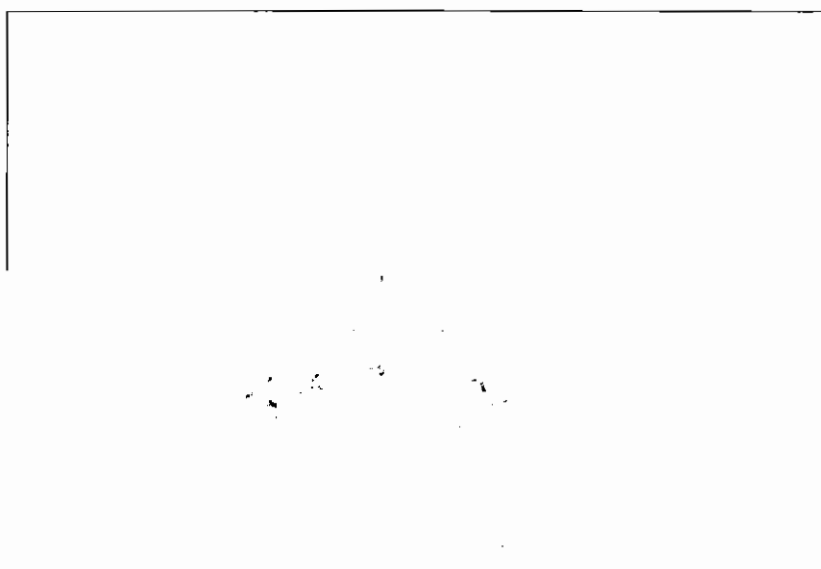
Takhat Sri Keshgarh Sahib, Anandpur Sahib, Punjab (photo Amolak Singh)



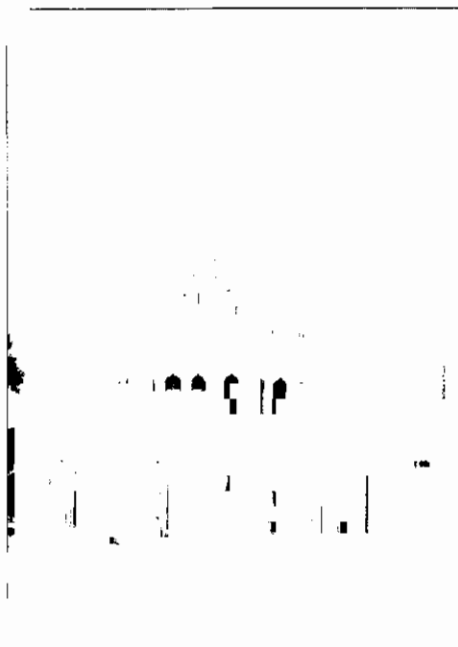
Takhat Sri Keshgarh Sahib, Anandpur Sahib, Punjab.
(A view of Sangat on festival occasion)



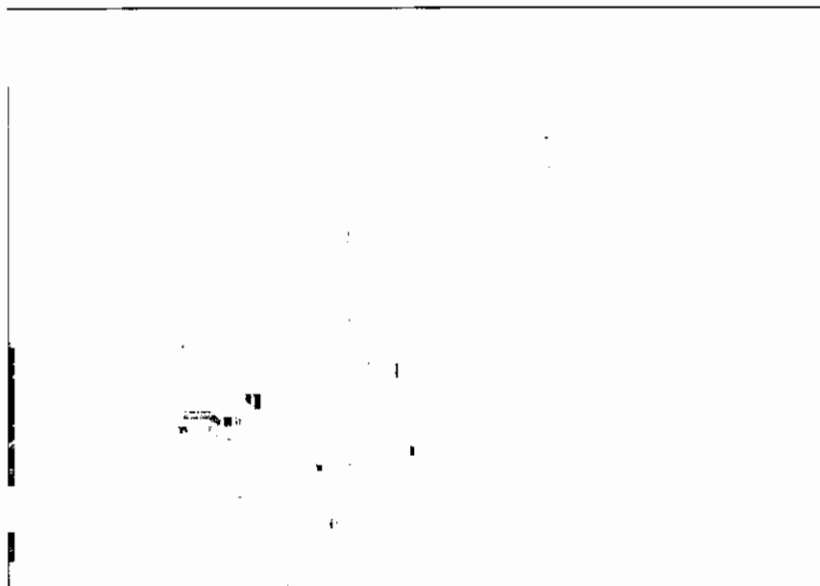
Gurdwara Anandgarh Sahib (Anandgarh Fort), Sri Anandpur Sahib, Punjab.



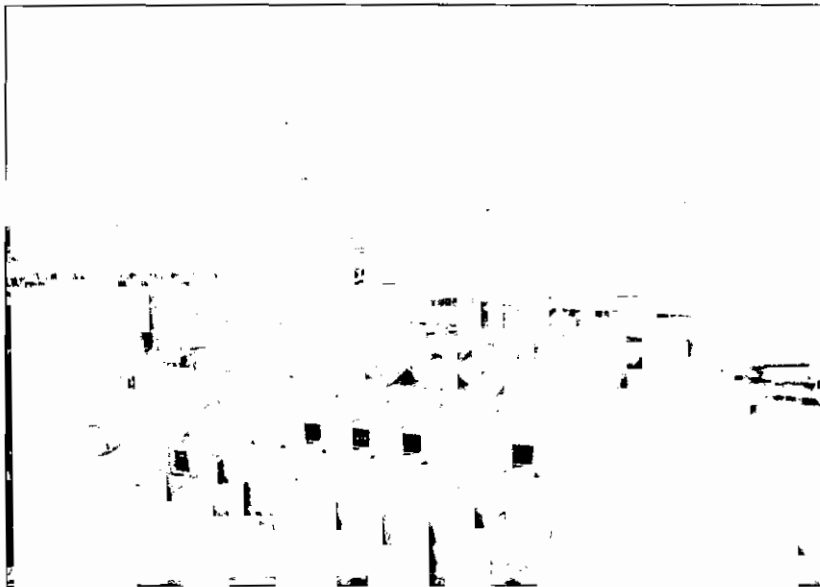
Gurdwara Guru Ka Lahore , Anand Karaj Sahib, H.P
(Guru Gobind Singh's marriage was performed here)



Gurdwara Sri Lohgarh Sahib,
Anandpur Sahib Punjab



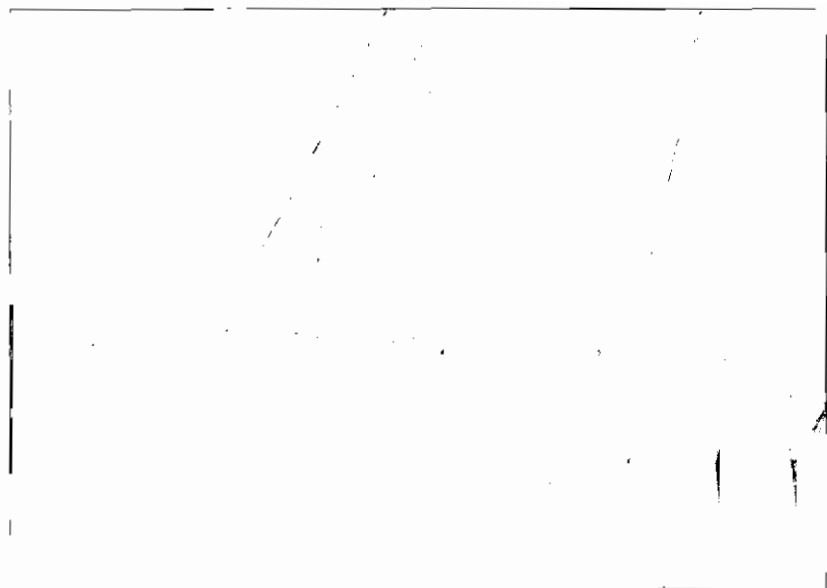
Gurdwara Fatehgarh Sahib. Anandpur Sahib, Punjab



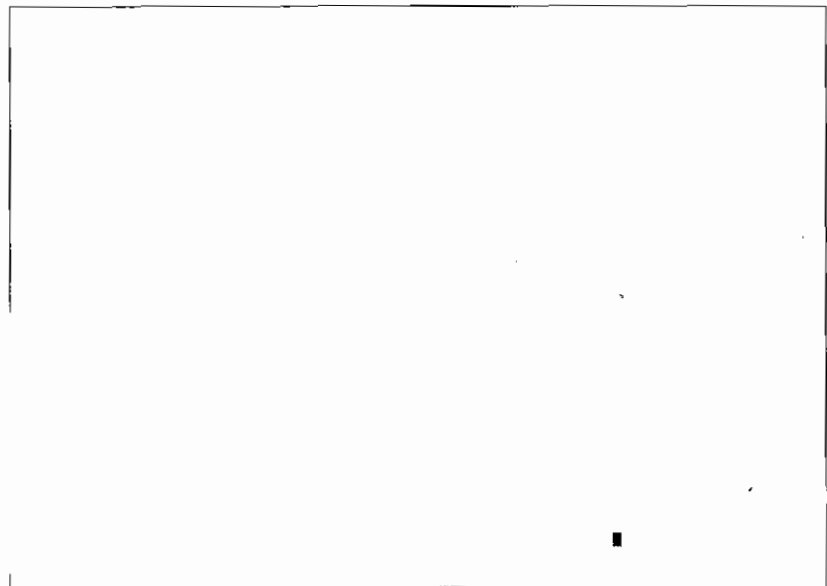
Gurdwara Sri Harmandir Sahib, at the bank of river Jamuna,
Paonta Sahib, H.P



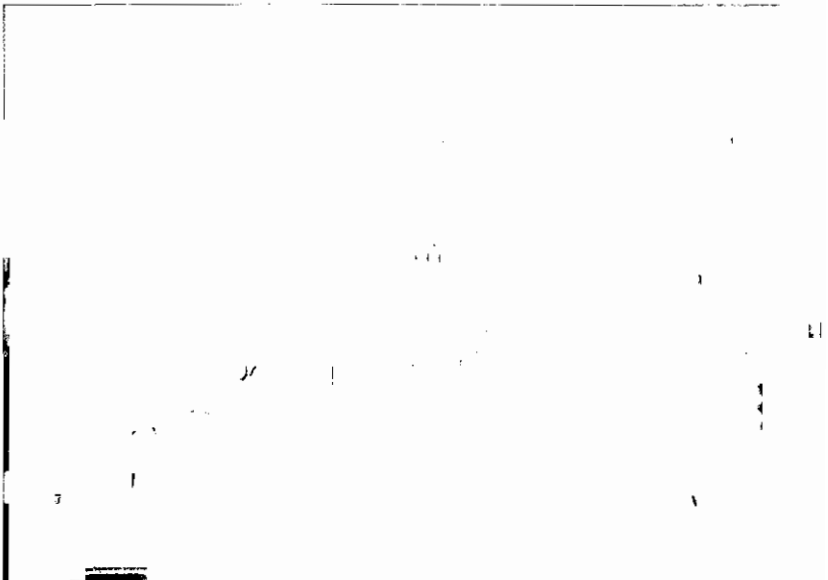
Central Hall of Gurdwara Harmandir Sahib, Paonta Sahib,
H.P. A view on festival occasion.



Gurdwara Dastar Asthan, Paonta Sahib, H.P.

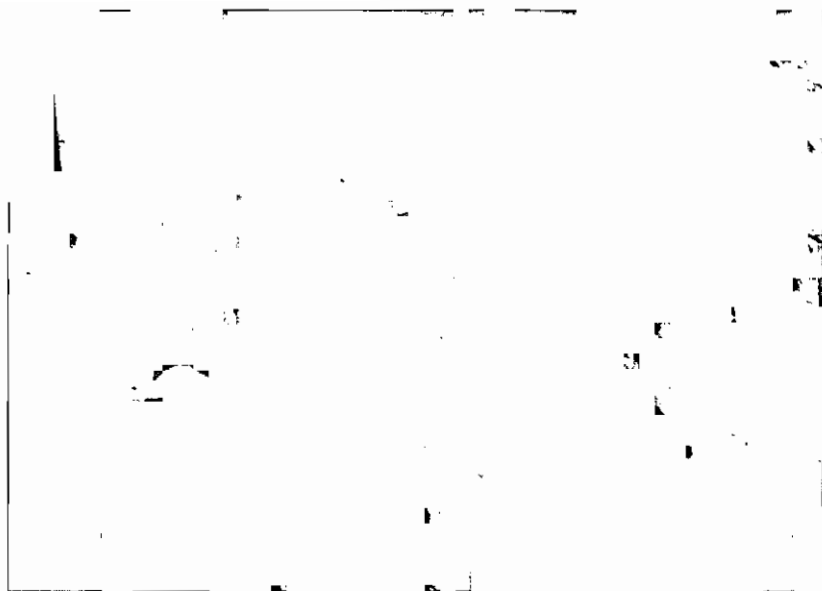


Gurdwara Tap Asthan, Paonta Sahib, H.P.

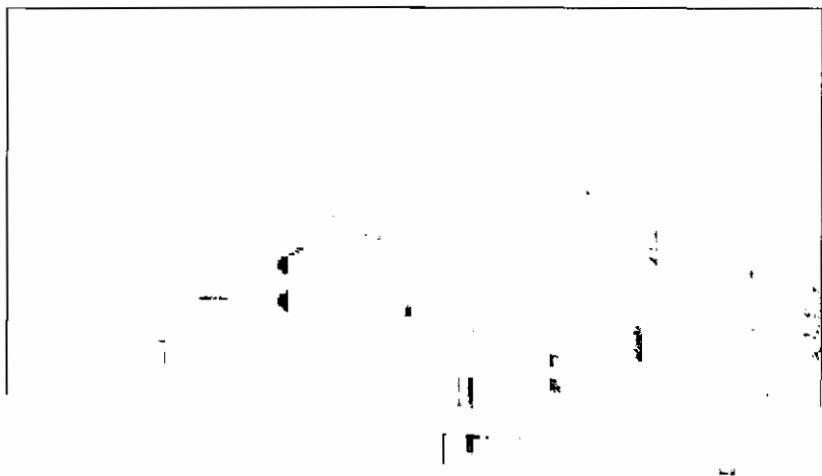


Gurdwara Shergah Sahib, Paonta Sahib, H.P. (Photo Amolak Singh)

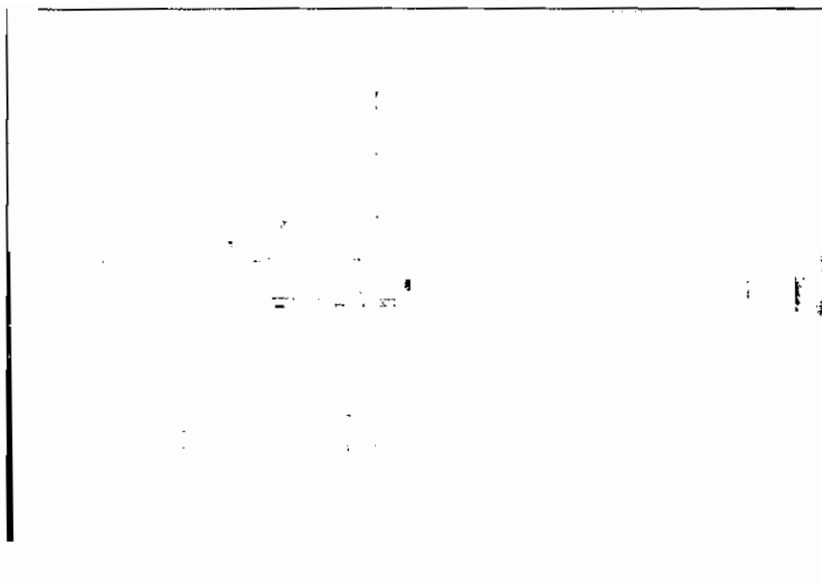
Gurdwara Tir Garhi Sahib, Paonta Sahib, Himachal Pradesh.



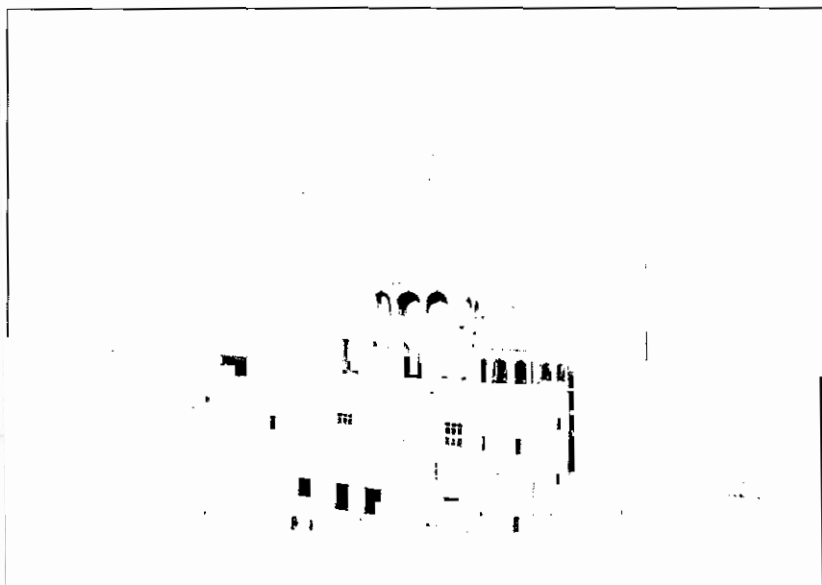
Holla Mohala Procession on the occasion of annual
Holi Festival celebration at Paonta Sahib.



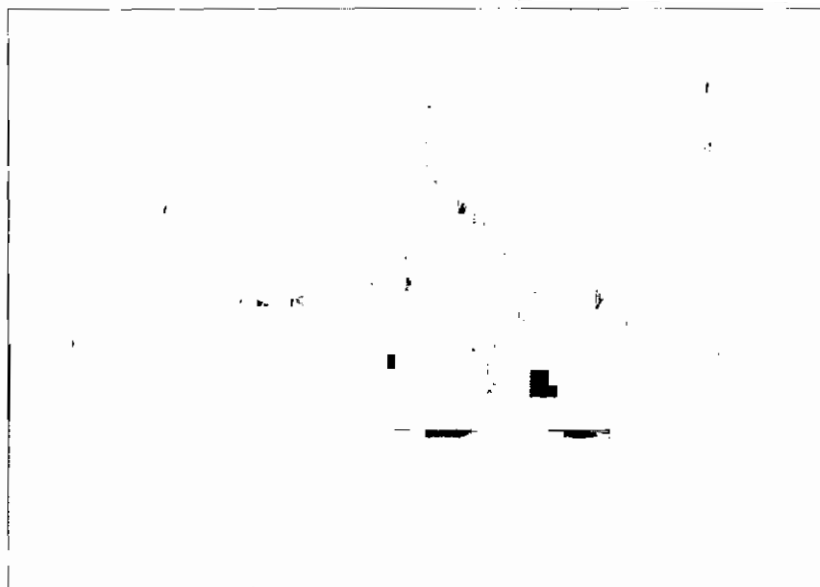
Gurdwara Bhangani Sahib, Paonta Sahib, Himachal Pradesh.
(Photo Amolak Singh)



Gurdwara Parivar Vichhora, Anandpur Sahib, Punjab



Gurdwara Garhi Sahib, Chamkaur, Punjab



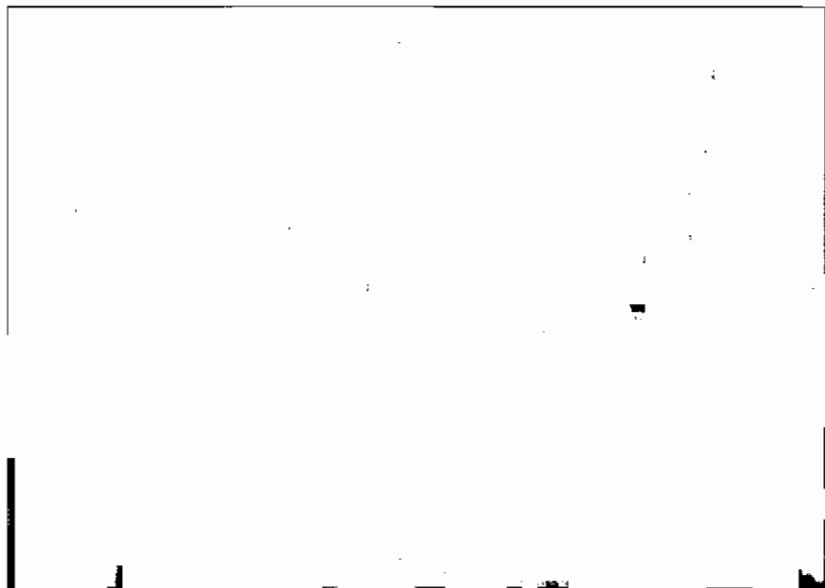
Gurdwara Charan Kamal, Machiwara Punjab



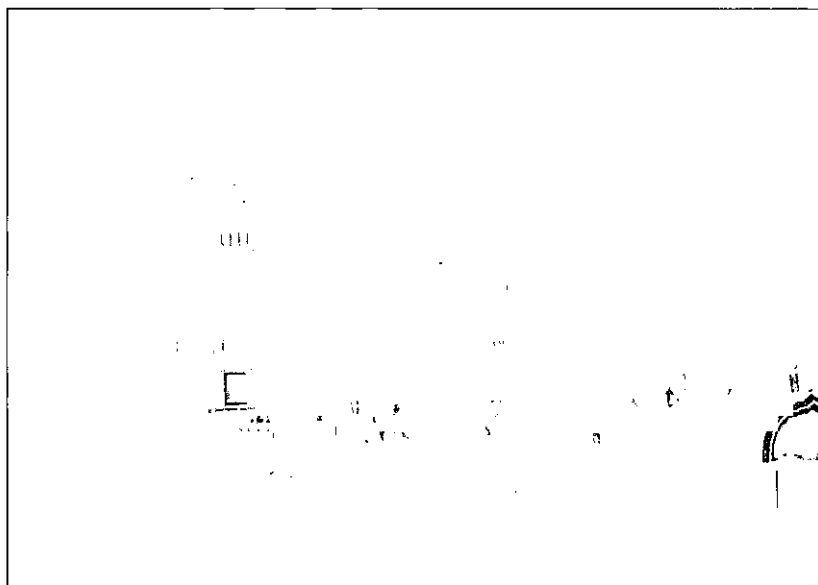
Gurdwara Manji Sahib, Alamgir, Ludhiana, Punjab



Gurdwara Thanda Burj, Fatehgarh Sahib, Sirhind (Mata Gujri, mother of Guru Gobind Singh and two younger sons of the Guru, Sahibzada Fateh Singh and Sahibzada Zorawar Singh were kept here in Mughal captivity.



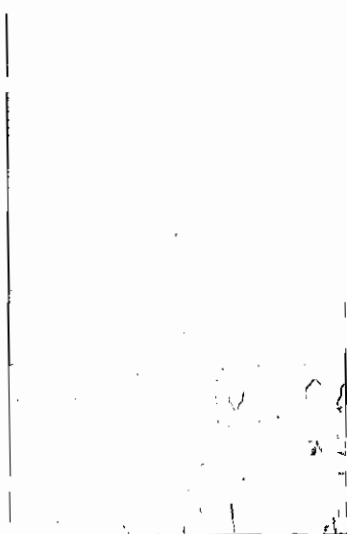
Takhat Sri Damdama Sahib, Talwandi Sabo, Punjab (During his stay at Damdama Sahib, Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji had established a Taksal (literary centre) here and had finally compiled Sri Guru Granth Sahib, popularly known as Damdami Sahib Bir)



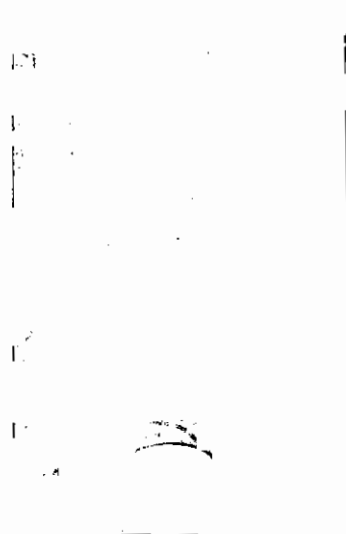
Takhat Sri Damdama Sahib, Talwandi Sabo, Punjab. (Photo Amolak Singh)



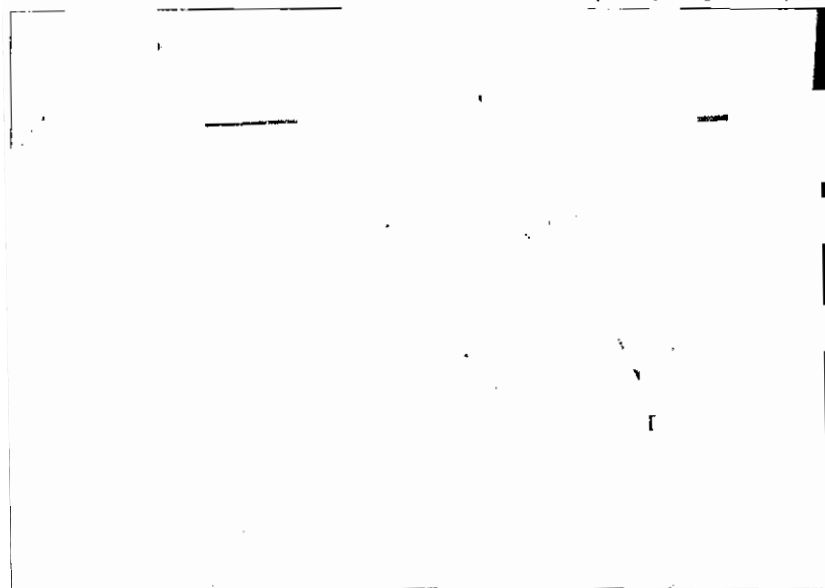
Takhat Sacch Khand, Sri Hazur Sahib, Nanded, Maharashtra



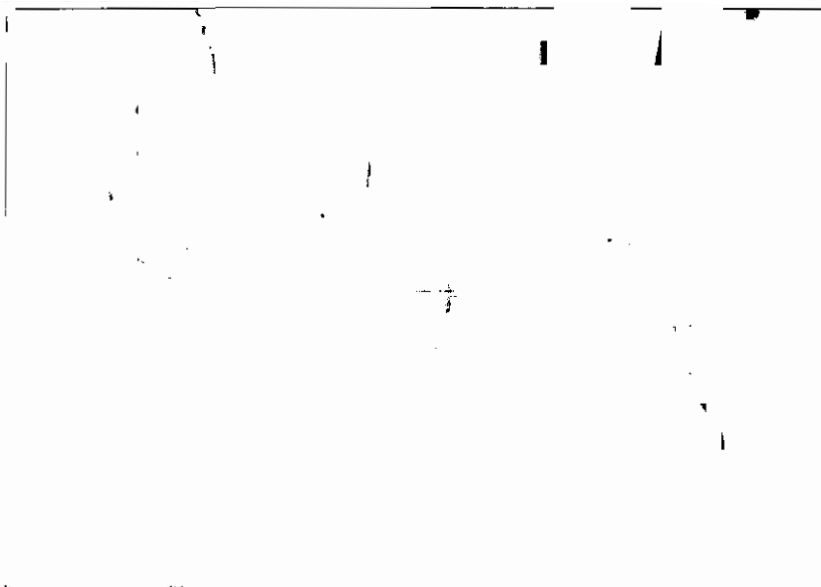
A view of the Murals, Naqashi and embellishment in the Central Hall, Gurdwara Takhat Sahib Sacch Khand, Sri Hazur Sahib, Nanded, Maharashtra. (A specimen of fresco painting of the early nineteenth century Sikh Art.)



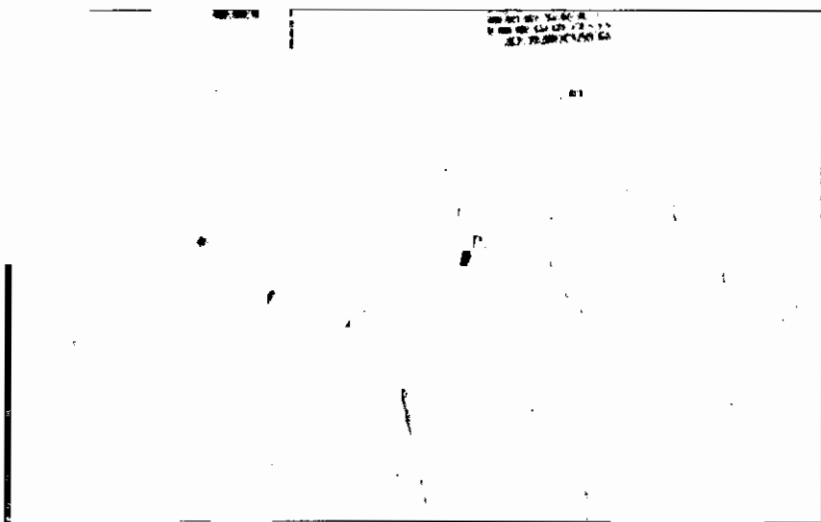
Murals, Naqashi and Jaratkari in the Central Hall, Gurdwara Takhat Sahib Sacch Khand Sri Hazur Sahib, Nanded, Maharashtra (A specimen of the fresco painting, wall and Naqashi of the early nineteenth century Sikh Art of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time.)



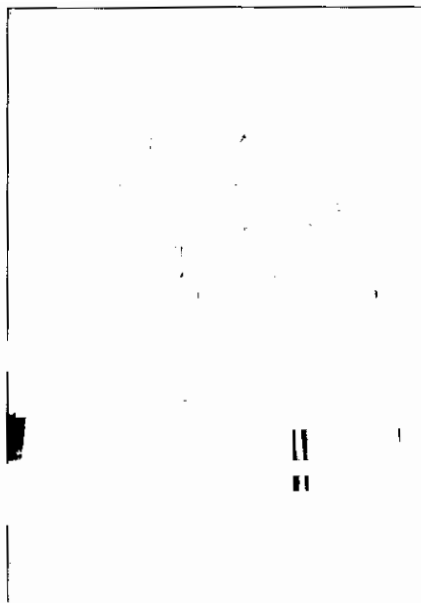
Samadh Bhai Daya Singh in the complex of Gurdwara Takhat Sahib Sacch Khand Harmandir Sahib, Hazur Sahib, Nanded, Maharashtra



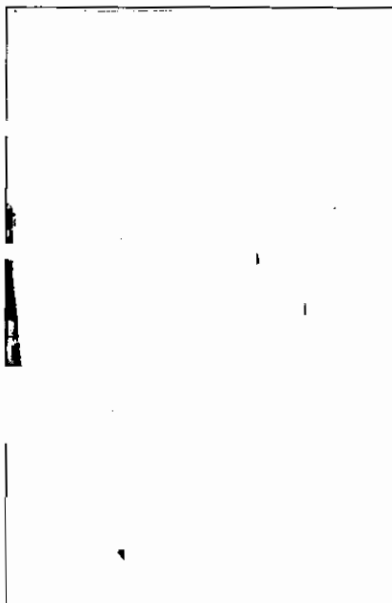
Shastra (arms) of Bhai Daya Singh displayed in the adjoining room of the Samadh of Bhai Daya Singh in the complex of Gurdwara Takhat Sacch Khand Sri Hazur Sahib, Nanded, Maharashtra



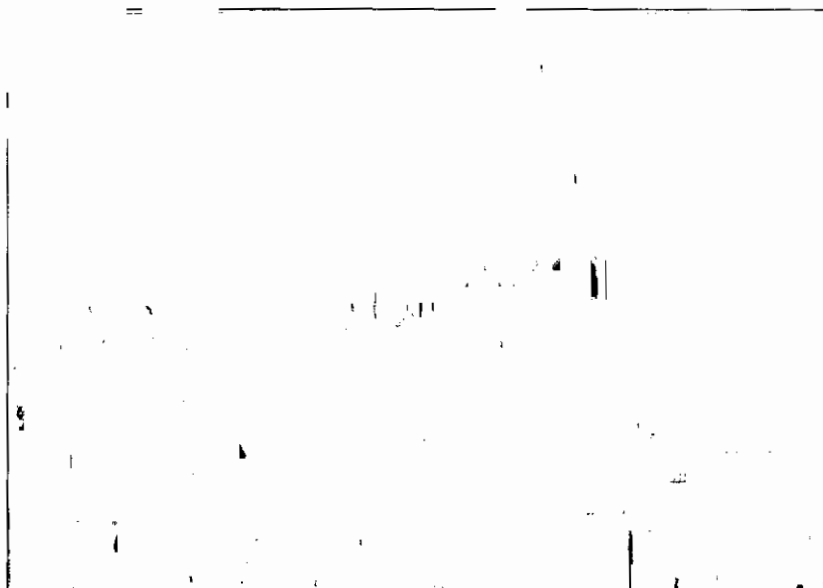
A stallion of rare breed kept in the stable in the compound of Gurdwara Takhat Sacch Khand Harmandir Sahib, Hazur Sahib, Nanded, Maharashtra. The stable has a number of horses from the fine breed which reminds of the quality of horses Guru Gobind Singh kept in his camp. These horses are not for human use. They are reared up with all care and are taken out in procession (Jalus) during the festival days commemorating Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji.



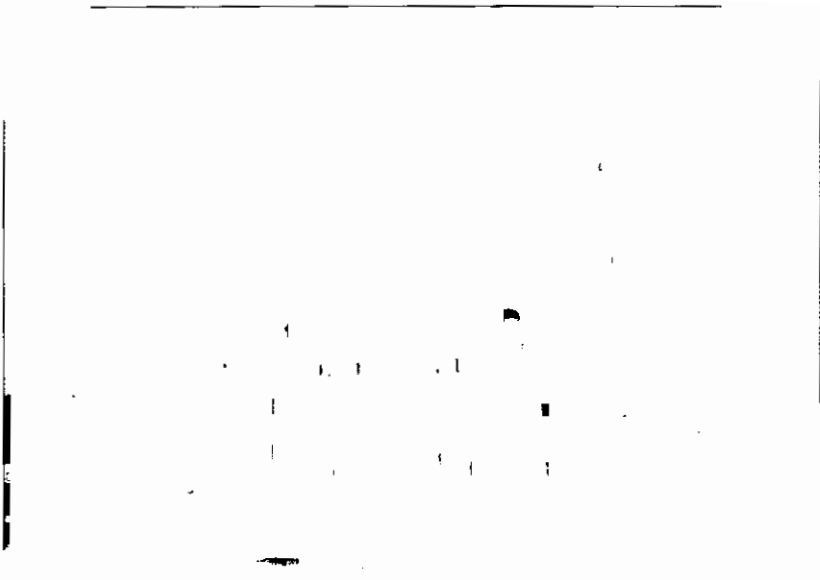
Gurdwara Sangat Sahib, Hazur
Sahib, Nanded, Maharashtra



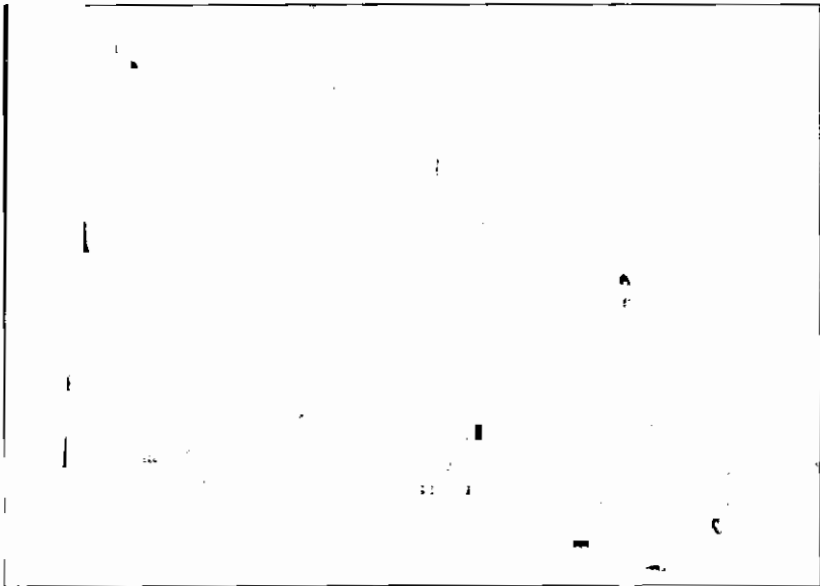
Gurdwara Mai Bhago, Nanded,
Maharashtra



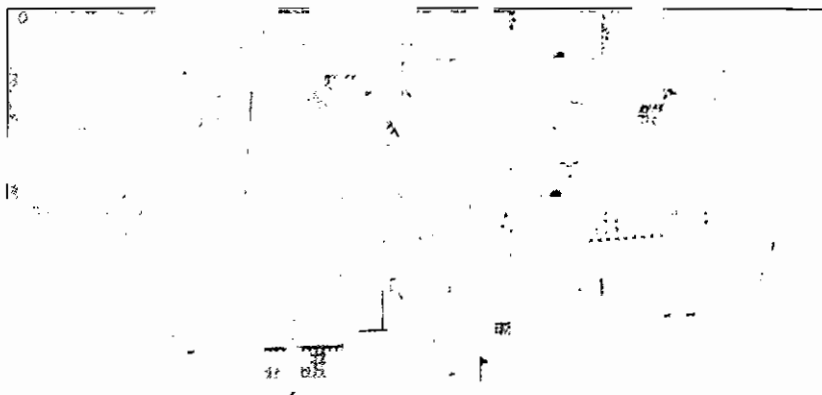
Gurdwara Jyoti Swarup Sahib, Fatehgarh Sahib



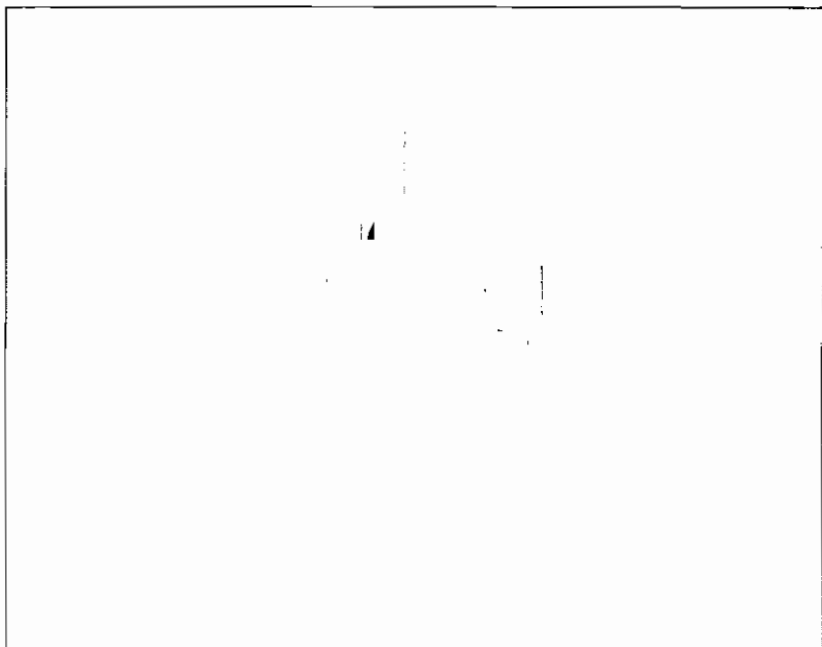
Gurdwara Shikarghat Sahib,, Nanded, Maharashtra



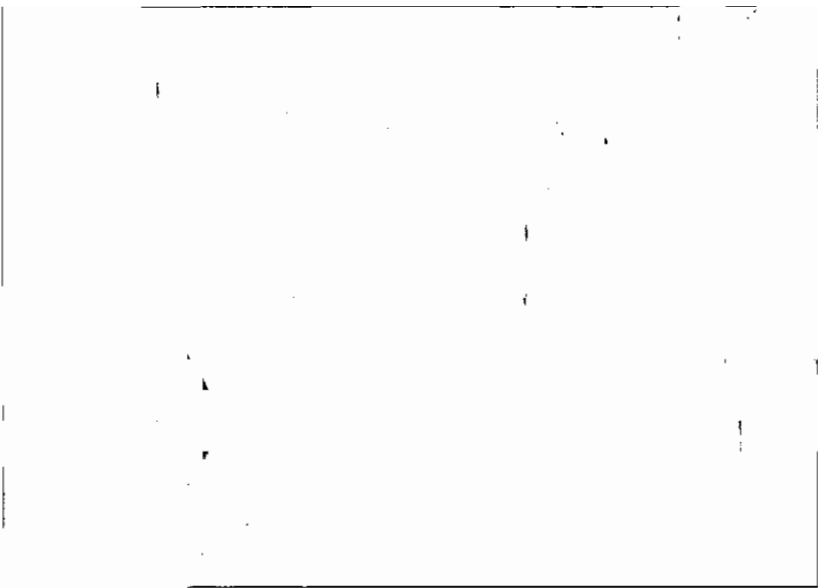
Gurdwara Heeraghat , Nanded, Maharashtra



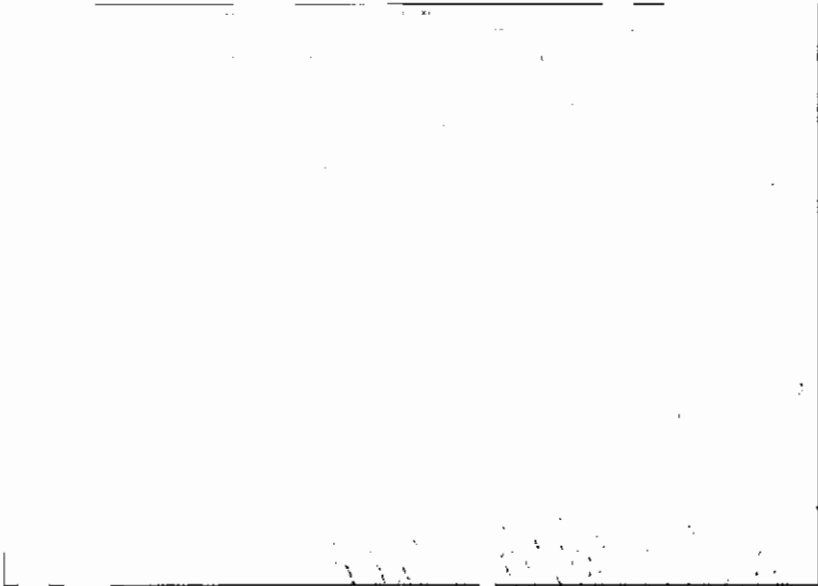
Gurdwara Banda Singh Ghat, Nanded, Maharastra



Gurdwara Sri Mukatsar Sahib, Mukatsar



31 Sri Guru Gobind Singh on horseback with attendants in the MS. copy (Bir) of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, kept at the Gurdwara Mai Bhago. A depiction of early Sikh Art of eighteenth century.

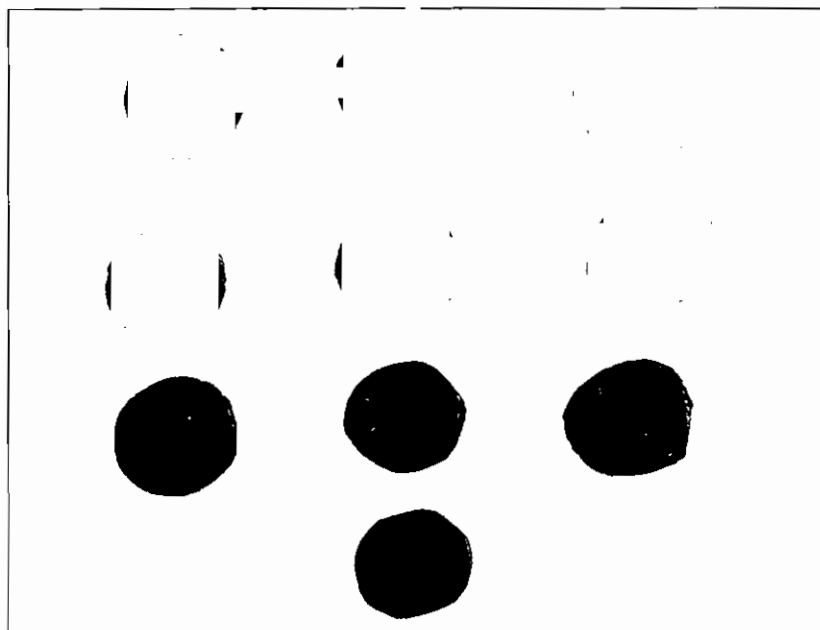


Miniature of Guru Nanak Dev ji in the MS. copy (Bir) of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, kept at the Gurdwara Mai Bhago. A depiction of early Sikh Art of eighteenth century.

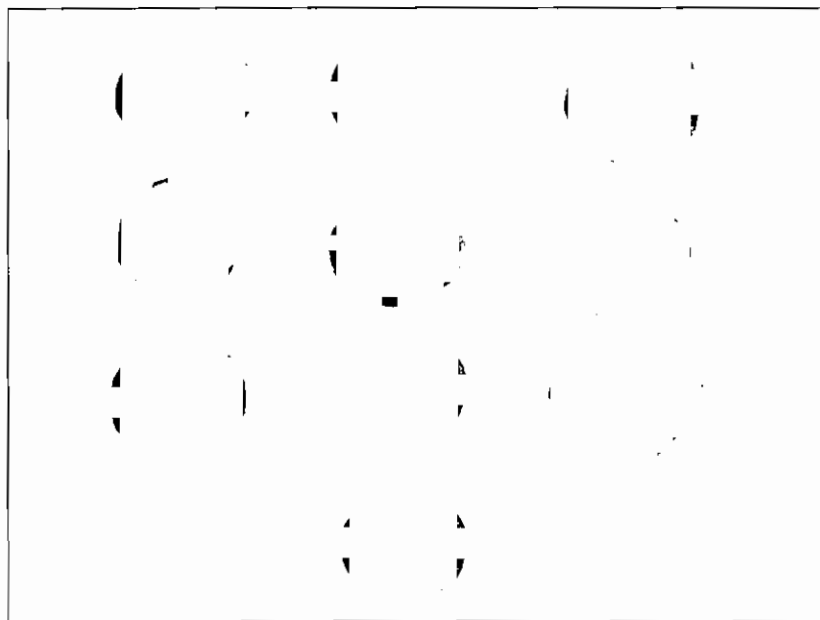


Silver Coins (Rupee) of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (Reverse)

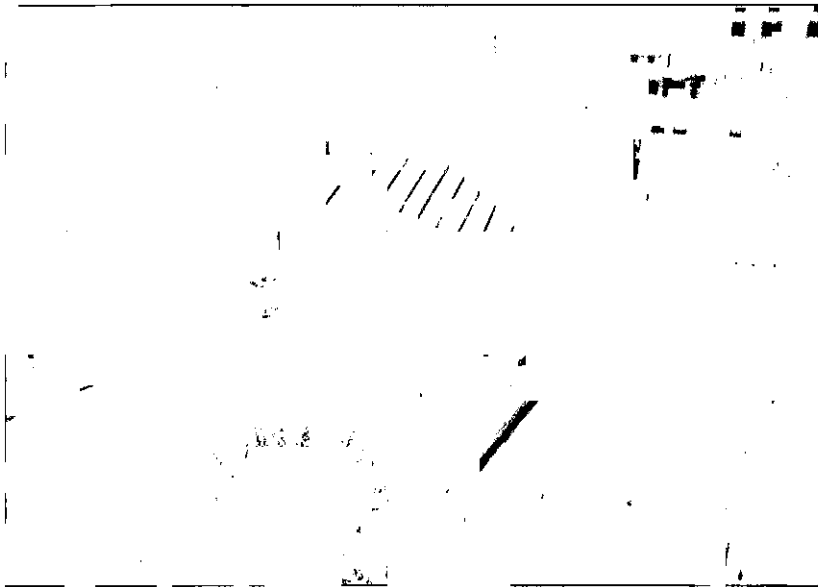
Silver Coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (obverse). Maharaja Ranjit Singh struck no coin in his name. He carried the tradition of Sikh Coins depicting Khalsa Sovereignty in the names of the Sikhs Gurus introduced by Banda Singh Bahadur. These coins were called Gobindshahi. Several types of coins were current in the dominion of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (copper, silver and gold). The coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh are documentary evidence of his commitment to Khalsa tradition and secular outlook of the Maharaja. The legends of these coins are inscribed in Gurmukhi and Persian scripts and variety of symbols depicted are from Hindu culture. The standard rupee was the silver coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh were called Nanakshahi.



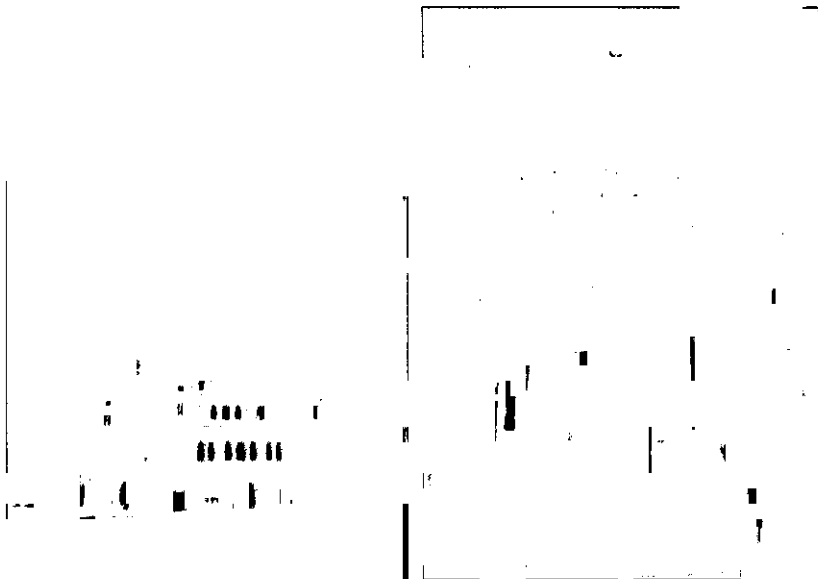
Copper Coins Siqqa Falus of Maharaja Ranjit Singh with Gumukhi inscription and symbols (obverse)



Copper Coins Siqqa Falus of Maharaja Ranjit Singh with Gumukhi inscription, name of the mint (Amritsar/Ambarsar) and symbols. (Reverse)

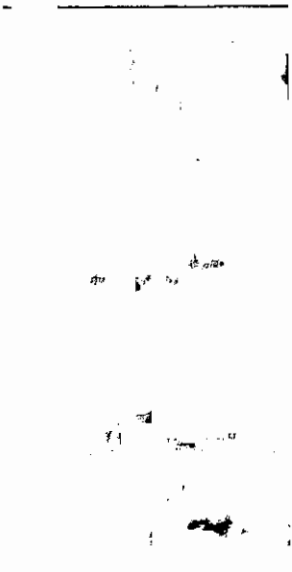


Kavi Darbar Asthan, Gurdwara Harmandir Sahib, Paonta Sahib, H.P.




Gurdwara Fatehgarh Sahib,
Sirhind, Punjab

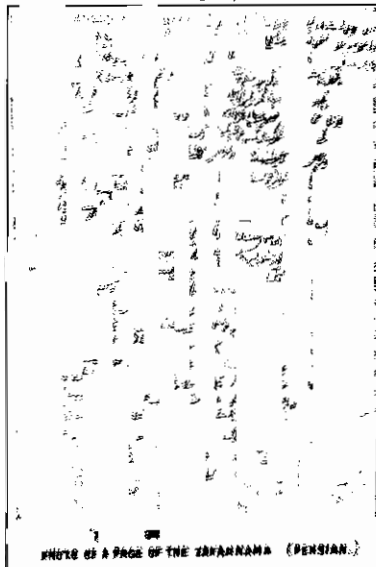
Memorial of Kalpi Rishi, Paonta
Sahib, H.P. Kalpi Rishi Asthan,
Paonta Sahib, H.P, built by Guru
Gobind Singh ji



Hukamnama of Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji
(denouncing Masand system) dated Samvat
1758, Miti Chet 2, Satran 7 (A.D. 1701, Lines7).
(Personal collection Dr. Madan Jit Kaur,
Government Museum and Art Gallery,
Chandigarh).



Hukamnama of Sri Guru Gobind Singh
(denouncing Masand system) addressed to
Sangat of Machhiwara, dated Chet 14, Samvat
1755 (12 March, 1699) (Central Sikh Museum,
Golden Temple, Amritsar . Photo Satpal Danish).



A Folio of the Zafarnama, Sri Guru Gobind
Singh's letter to Emperor Aurangzeb in Persian
Script. (Central Sikh Museum, Golden Temple,
Amritsar, Photo Satpal Danish)



A Folio of the Zafarnama, Sri Guru Gobind
Singh's letter to Emperor Aurangzeb in
Gurmukhi Script. (Central Sikh Museum, Golden
Temple, Amritsar, Photo Satpal Danish)



Holy Relics of Guru Gobind Singh- Mohar (seal) of the Damdama Sahib
Taksal (Photo Satpal Danish)

Kalman (reed pens) of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, preserved in the Central Hall of Gurdwara Sri Harmandir Sahib, Paonta Sahib, H.P. These relics are displayed in the glass frame on the wall of the right hand side of the Central Hall.

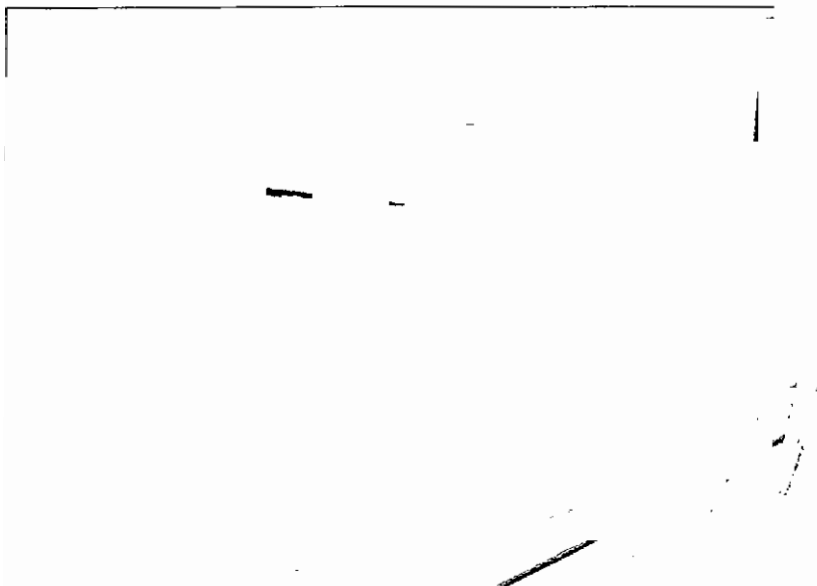
Holy Relics of Guru Gobind Singh- Kangha (wooden comb embellished with Naqashi (Central Sikh Museum, Golden Temple, Amritsar, Photo Satpal Danish).



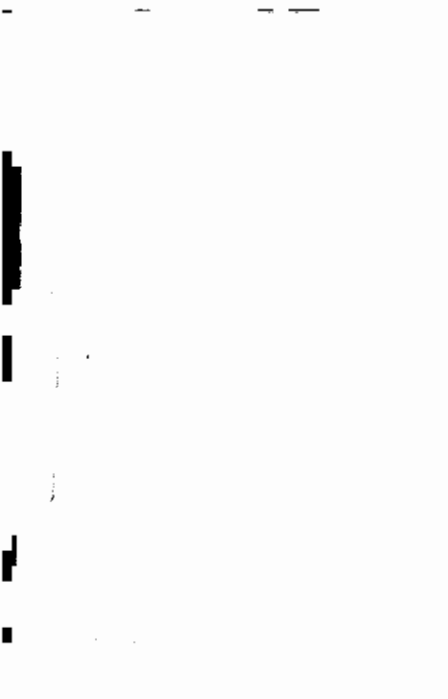
Holy Relics of Sri Guru Gobind Singh- Sri Sahib (big sword) and Kirpan (small sword)
(Central Sikh Museum, Golden Temple, Amritsar, Photo Satpal Danish).



Holy Relics of Sri Guru Gobind Singh- Katar (dasat panja) (Central Sikhs Museum, Golden Temple, Amritsar, Photo Satpal Danish).



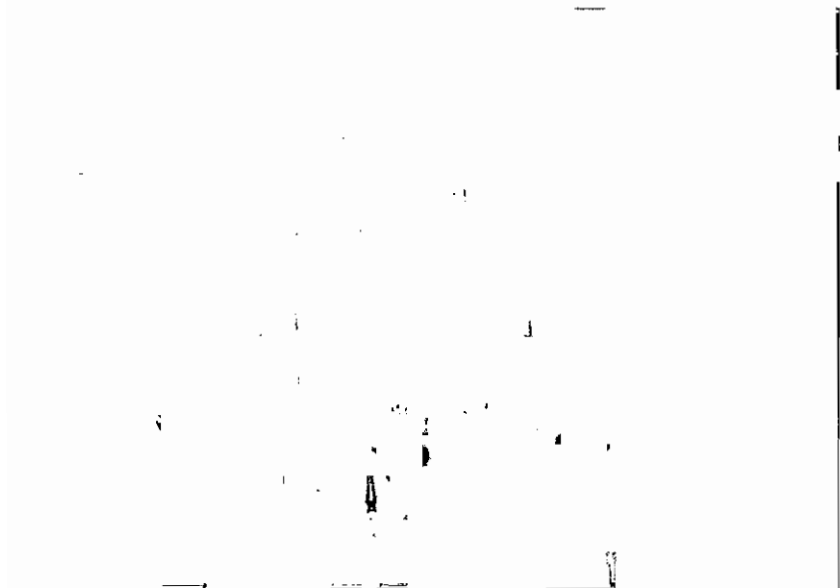
Holy Relics of Sri Guru Gobind Singh- Kamarkasa (girdle/ waist band) and Gatra (belt for hanging sword), (Central Sikh Museum, Golden Temple, Amritsar, Photo Satpal Danish).



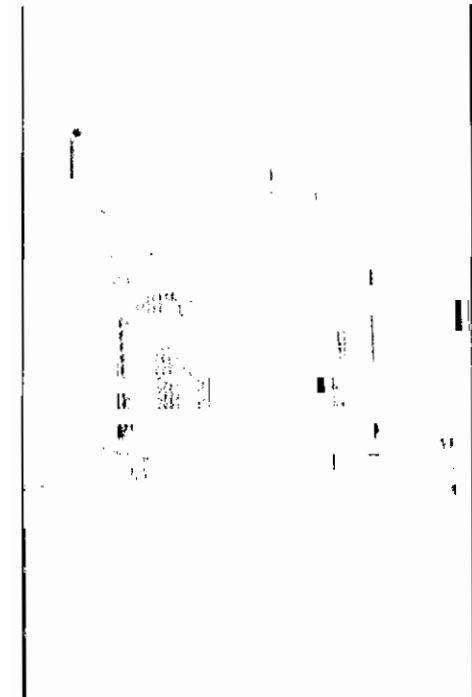
Holy Arms of Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji preserved in the Central Hall of Gurdwara Sri Harmandir Sahib, Paonta Sahib, H.P.

These relics are kept in a glass frame fixed on the wall of the hall on the right hand side.

Holy Arms of Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji preserved in the Central Hall of Gurdwara Sri Harmandir Sahib, Paonta Sahib, H.P. These relics are kept in a glass frame fixed on the wall of the hall on the right hand side of the Central Hall.



Central Hall of Gurdwara Sri Harmandir Sahib, Paonta Sahib, H.P. The Shastra (arms) of Sri Guru Gobind Singh are displayed in the glass frame fixed on the wall of the hall on the right hand side of the Central Hall.



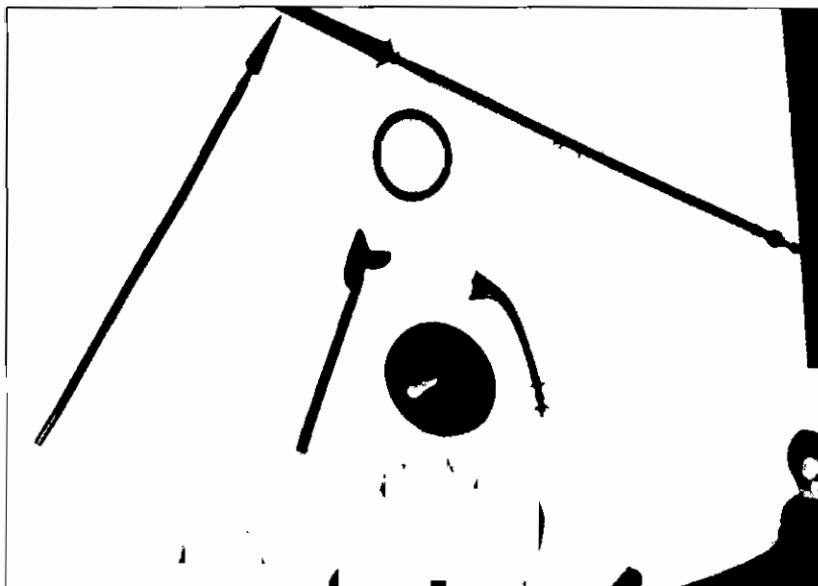
Holy Arms of Sri Guru Gobind Singh-Shastra preserved in the collection of Holy relics (arms belonging to Sikh Gurus and Sikhs warrior-martyrs) kept in an enclosure at Sri Akal Takhat Sahib, Golden Temple complex, Amritsar.

These holy arms are exhibited to the public daily in the evening and on various important occasions including the Jalau (display of precious articles and jewellery) of Sri Akal Takht Sahib. These holy arms included Sri Sahib (swords) 2, Teer (Arrow) 2, the point of each of these arrows are moulded with one tola (11gms) Gold. There are also two Katars (small swords) belonging to Sahibzada Ajit Singh and Sahibzada Jujhar Singh, the elder sons of Sri Guru Gobind Singh.



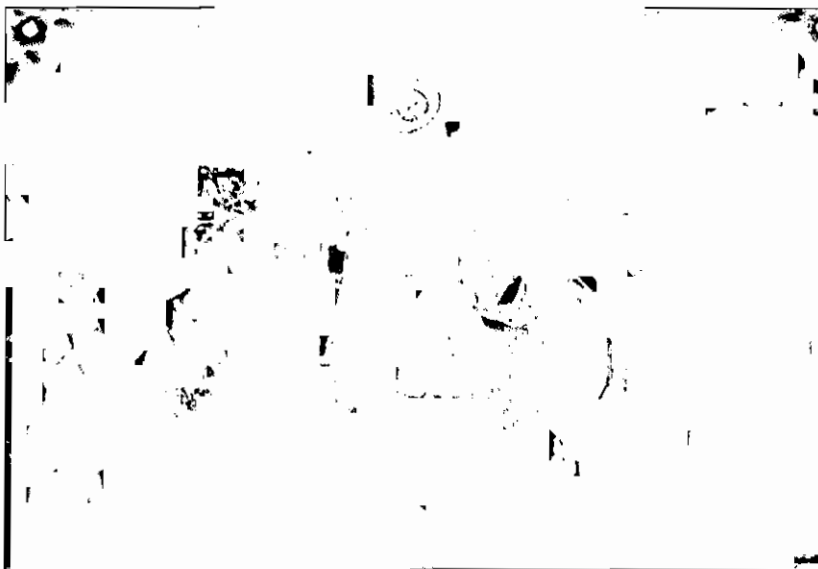
Holy Arms
(Shastra) of Sri
Guru Gobind Singh
preserved at
Gurdwara Sacch
Khand Sri Hazur
Sahib, Nanded,
Maharashtra.
(Photo Satpal
Danish)

Holy Relics of Sri Guru Gobind Singh preserved at Gurdwara Sacch Khand Sri Hazur Sahib, Nanded Kalgi (golden plume), Kirpan (small sword), and Teer (big arrow). (Photo Satpal Danish)



Holy Arms of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji received at Sri Akal Takht Sahib, Golden Temple Complex, Amritsar in 1966 from U.K

1. Dhal 2. Wada Barchha 3. Barchhi 4. Sunehri Chakar
5. Shamshir Teg 6. Dah-i-Agni.

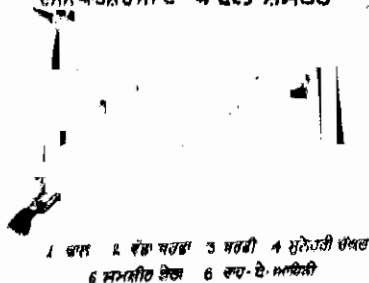


Sri Guru Gobind Singh on the horse- back (Mural on the inside wall of the stair-case, first storey of the Central Shrine, Golden Temple).

Mural of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time.

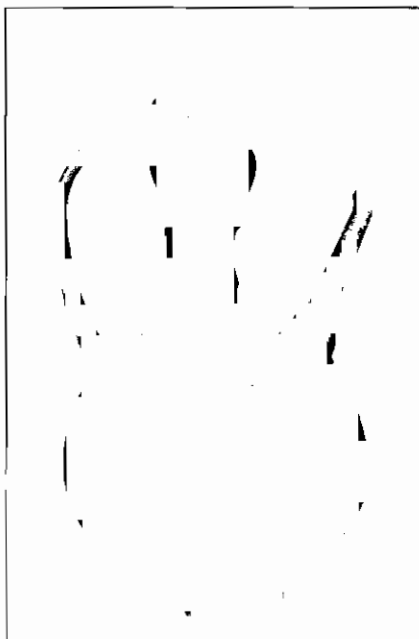
ਅਸੁ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨ ਖੰਡੇ ਖੜਗ, ਤੁਪਕ ਤਬਰ ਅਰੁ ਤੀਰ॥
ਸੇਫ ਸਰੋਹੀ ਸੈਰਬੀ, ਸਹੀ ਹਮਾਰੇ ਪੀਰ ॥

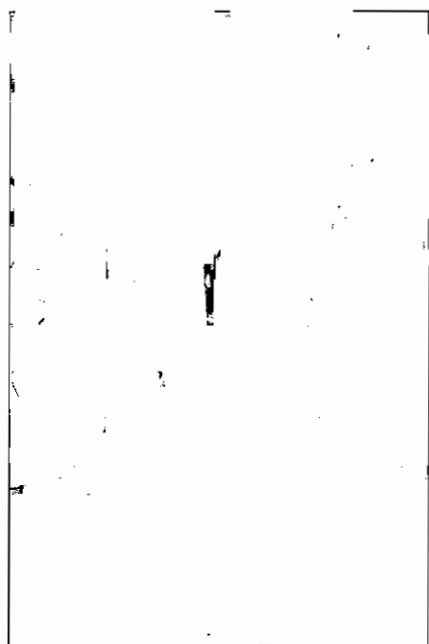
ਹਸਮ ਪਾਰਸ਼ਰ ਸੀਏ ਆਵਨ ਸਮਰਰ



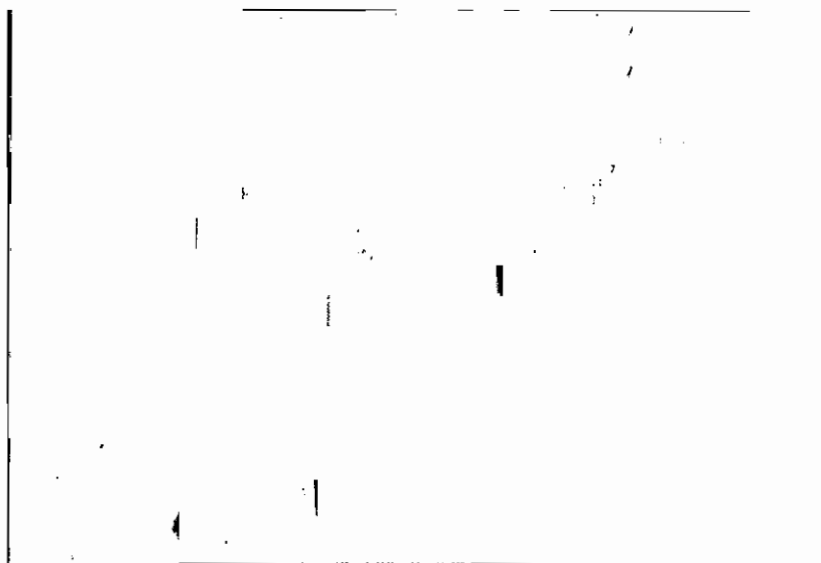
Holy Arms- Sastra (weapons) of Sri Guru Gobind Singh, brought from U.K for display in India. These holy arms were displayed at various places in India for Darshan and later on deposited at Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib, Anandpur Sahib, (Punjab). These Shastras are preserved at Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib, Anandpur Sahib.

Ganga Sagar of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji bestowed to the ancestors of the Rai Kalan.





A view of the interior of the Sanctum Sanctorum of Takhat Sacch Khand Sri Hazur Sahib, Nanded, Maharashtra, enshrining the holy relics of Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji. (Camera is not allowed inside the Central Hall.)



A view of the ritual performed at the opening of the Sanctum Sanctorum of Gurdwara Takhat Sacch Khand Sri Hazur Sahib, Nanded, Maharashtra enshrining the holy relics of Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji.

GURU GOBIND SINGH'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Guru Gobind Singh, preached a distinct philosophy of life which has a great potentiality of providing inspiration to the modern man engulfed in the hazards of a materialistic society devoid of morality and humanitarian considerations. Fearlessness, as evident from the *bani* (devotional compositions) of Guru Gobind Singh is the keynote of the philosophy of the Guru. He exclaimed:

I shall speak to the world what He tells me.

I cannot be silenced through the fear of these mortals.¹

Again the Guru announced categorically:-

I am under obligation to none

I do not bind myself to the service of any sect.

I sow the seed of the unknowable Lord

Whatever the Lord speaketh to me the same I must say.

What He revealeth.²

Guru Gobind Singh's life was full of constant struggle. It has been repeatedly stated in the writings of Guru Gobind Singh that life is a battlefield and constitutes constant struggle against evil forces. This warfare in our life never ceases. We have to take decision to choose right from wrong. One who loves Truth has the

capacity to discriminate between right and wrong. Man should not be intimidated and discouraged by the prospect of the combat. But he should arm himself with the sword of truth and knowledge. When the battle for fighting egoism (*haumai*) ceases, then battle of spiritual endeavour begins. Here, one has to struggle for spiritual emancipation with constant practice of *nam simran*. The yearning for the Divine Love is not a passive state, it compels man to serve humanity and to fight for the honour of God's glory. Guru Gobind Singh pronounced that, to a virtuous man, God himself gives the strength to fight and triumph. The Guru comments in 'Sri Krishan Avtar':

Glory to the noble ones,
who on their own earthly way,
Carry upon their lips the Name of the Lord,
and ever contemplate deep within their hearts,
to be ever ready to fight the evil.
The body is fleeting and shall not abide forever;
Man embarking in the ship of singing God's eulogies
shall cross the ocean of the world.
Make this body a house of resignation;
Light your understanding as a lamp therein.
take the sword of Divine Knowledge into your hand,
and cut off the curse of timidity within you.³

Guru Gobind Singh was an inspired patriot and a true lover of humanity. He preached the lesson of all embracing love and to conformity to the sublime code of morality and social ethics—never to usurp others rights and cause suffering. The following guidance given by the Guru to Bhai Nand Lal, a gifted scholar of his court, of his adds enormously to our knowledge of his philosophy of life:

Remembering that all living beings are God's
creators and belong to Him,
one should not give them pain or sorrow;
For believe me, O Nand Lal,
When His creatures have to suffer,
the Creator feels the pang and is displeased.⁴

Love is the keynote of Guru Gobind Singh's ideology which

has been considered as an essential pre-requisite for the devotion of God. The Guru says that love of God means love of his humanity. Love is the most holiest act; it is the path to reach God. The Guru proclaimed in 'Akal Ustat' :

Hear you all, I tell the Truth,
Those who love, meet the Lord.⁵

His God was truth and the Guru practised truth in words and deeds. This is the basic fact of life that the path of truth is full of sufferings and sacrifice as exemplified by the Guru in his own life. The martyrdom of his father, mother, four sons and hundreds of his dear followers for the lofty ideals of freedom, justice, righteousness and human rights was unique in the annals of mankind. Guru Gobind Singh's concept of the 'Divine' is deeply rooted in his rich spiritual experience and yet he did not claim any divinity in himself.

The idea of Divine intervention in human history, is deeply rooted in his writings. In his *Bachitra Natak* he declared that God had commissioned him 'to uphold righteousness and to destroy all evil-doers from the root and branch'. While believing in his heaven-ordained mission, he took care to see that his followers did not fall into the web of the Hindu Doctrine of *Avtarvad* (theory of Re-incarnation). He emphatically asserted that he was human, and that to pay divine honours to him would be blasphemous :

Whoever says I am the (God), shall fall into the pit of hell.
Recognise me as God's servant only.

Have no doubt whatever about this.
I am a servant of the Supreme Lord, a beholder of the wonder of His Creation.⁶

Much emphasis in his *bani* is laid on the value of *seva* (voluntary service) of the humanity. In 'Krishan Avtar', Guru Gobind Singh seeks Almighty's support for fulfilling his mission of life for the service of humanity - the blessing of ever contained pot (*deg*) to feed the poor, hungry and needy and the boon of the mighty sword to destroy the oppressors and tyrants.⁷ It is emphatically evident from his life history that religion had become for him the living experience of God through the service of

humanity. He was commissioned by the God to emancipate humanity.⁸ This made him a man of spiritual consciousness and service became his life passion. In an age of crisis he was called upon to show the path of active resistance with meagre resources and that too at a very young age. When he opted for the life of active resistance against oppression, injustice and tyranny, he acted spiritually in harmony with the Divine Will. The Guru was a perfect being as he was perfectly attuned to the Will of God (*Hukam, bhana or raza*).

The command of the Lord pinned him down as the servant of God and the saviour of humanity.⁹ His divine calling was to retain communion with Almighty through the service of the common man, the downtrodden, suppressed and weak. Guru Gobind Singh was a practical mystic whose spirituality was reflected in every sphere of his daily life. The Guru emphatically professes in the 'Bachitar Natak' that the spiritual needs of the soul could not be sacrificed whatever the circumstances of life may be; the lesson of the stanza is; it is always the spiritual endeavour that sustains men, especially in hours of crisis and difficult times.¹⁰

It is on account of this religious ethos that even in highly critical war-conditions, the daily congregations and routine prayer and worship were never allowed to be sacrificed in the camp of Guru Gobind Singh. As his whole life was dedicated to the devotion of 'Akal Purakh', Guru Gobind Singh was completely detached from desires, ego and self-pride. All his actions, therefore were for the worship and service of God and his humanity.¹¹ All these acts of service were impersonal, non-egoistic and without any desire for personal gain or honour. This attitude endowed him with great humility. The Guru frequently employed terms like *keet* (worm), *das* (slave) and *sewak* (servant) while speaking about himself. Even when he won battles, he credited his victories to God's blessings. The Guru never took credit for his endeavours. Whenever he was saved from dangerous situations it was looked upon by him as a sign of God's mercy done. The Guru tells :

The victory I win, hath come to me through Thy Grace, O Lord of Death.¹²

Another example of Guru's immense humility and deep sense of gratitude to the Grace of Almighty is noteworthy in this stanza:

Thou has turned many an insignificant man like me,
from mere blades of grass into a mountain.
There is no other cherisher of the poor except Thee,
O My Lord, forgive me my errors,
There is none who hath erred as I have.
They who are in Thy service have their
houses (hearts) filled with wealth (spiritual treasure).
In this *Kalyuga* and in all ages great is the strength
in the confidence of the,
Powerful Arm of the Sword (representing God).¹³

Guru Gobind Singh's *bani* is replete with expressions of love of humanity and service to the mankind without any discrimination. Even in the midst of battles the sense of human values was not allowed to be violated. For example, once in the battlefield, Bhai Ghanyya, a devotee of the Guru continued to serve water to the soldiers of both sides with perfect impartiality. This was considered as an unpatriotic act by some of the followers of the Guru. The matter was reported to the Guru. Bhai Ghanyya was asked to explain his conduct. He replied that he had learnt from the Guru to look up at all as brothers and manifestations of God. The Guru was much pleased and complemented him for the service he was doing. Besides, Bhai Ghanyya was also provided with a first aid box to apply medicine to the wounded soldiers in the battle-field. Thus started the prototype of the Red Cross Society's services-first time in the camp of the *Khalsa* of Guru Gobind Singh in India. Similarly the rules of chivalry in the course of war were to be duly observed. The *Khalsa* had been ordered not to pursue the running enemy, nor to take undue advantage of the opponent's bad luck or of any misfortune that might have befallen the enemy side to avenge themselves.¹⁴ Such were the ethics of war observed in the army of the Guru.

Guru Gobind Singh was an impartial admirer and judge of the feats and merits of warriors. The acts of valour and bravery performed even by the opponents were appreciated with equal

recognition by the Guru. We get an evidence of this spirit in 'Bachitra Natak' regarding the heroism of an opponent, Hari Chand. The Guru observes :

Hari Chand was angered and killed many brave warriors of our side.

He struck arrows and rushed through large armies.¹⁵

The Guru was himself the embodiment of truth, love, humility and forgiveness (even to detractors and opponents). It is true that the evil had to be resisted and uprooted, yet the sword was never to be struck in a spirit of revenge or in anger or hatred. The weak were to be protected against oppression and tyranny without entertaining any aggressive intentions. Guru Gobind Singh had immense control over his emotions. The Guru kept his head cool throughout the many dreadful wars fought by him. He never departed from the self imposed high moral traditions of warfare and truth. He would never avenge himself on the flee enemy and would never occupy an inch of territory for expansion of personal power. His was a war of righteousness and he would not even excuse the lapses of his own men.

Guru Gobind Singh was not a soldier by profession. He had to fight to meet the challenge of the times under the pressure of circumstances. But when he was called to fight he performed his moral duty wholeheartedly and emerged victorious and stronger in his efforts to defend the religious order of the Sikh community from the Hill Rajas and Mughals as well as the common masses from the oppression and tyranny of the rulers.

The *Dharam Yudh* of Guru Gobind Singh must not be understood to as merely a war of aggression against any religion or against the followers of any religion as such. It was a war against aggression, tyranny and intolerance; a war for the protection of *Dharma* (righteousness) and moral principles. Essentially, Guru Gobind Singh was a man of saintly disposition. But he had to pick up the sword only to fight rampant tyranny and persecution. He suffered a lot and had to sacrifice his all, yet he retained complete serenity of mind, harbouring ill-will against none. His armed struggle was against no religion or community but against evil

forces of bigotry, tyranny and oppression. In his letter written from Dina to Emperor Aurangzeb who was at that time in Deccan, the Guru had particularly pointed out that he was not all enamoured by conflict and had accepted it as only a last resort, when other remedies having failed.¹⁶

The Guru also informed Aurangzeb that as a matter of fact the real victory had been on the victim's side and that the Guru had won the war against the tyrant because the fire he had lit up had become a mighty flame, that would not be extinguished. His war was a holy crusade and therefore, it had appeal for men of sensibility among Hindus and Muslims both.

The Guru was very much concerned for the moral, spiritual and intellectual development of his people. The task before him was enormous. He had to restore honour, self-respect and dignity to the people and raise them from a state of utter prostration to a level where they would be able to change the current of history. They had to be taught that life of the spirit was more valuable than mere physical existence. According to the *Tankhahnama of Bhai Nand Lal*; Guru Gobind Singh laid great emphasis on inculcation of virtues of *nam*, *dan* and *ishnan* (meditation on God's Name, deeds of charity, and cleanliness of body, mind and heart, consolidation of community life; attending the congregation of the faithful; to have the company of the pure, to welcome poor and; to shed ego, pride and lust; not to yield to anger, allurements of money, misappropriation of wealth and property of others; not to rob the poor by deceit or force; to subscribe offering (*dashwandh*) for the cause of altruism, not to acquire food by falsehood or deceit; not to tell lies; not to hanker after acquiring wealth and worldly desires; not to exploit or abuse women or to indulge in adultery; not to utter foul words to man of God; not to speak evils of others; not to indulge in addiction, intoxicants, gambling, robbery or theft, embezzlement, corruption; but be ever ready to fight against evil doers; to aid the poor, needy and destitute.¹⁷

The *Rehatnama of Bhai Desa Singh* also contains ample references on the philosophy of life of Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru made it categorical that a true Sikh must get *Khande de pahul* (*Amrit*); should bring home one's own honest earning; dedicate

1/10th of his income to the Guru's cause; not to indulge in wine, opium or tobacco in any form; not to take meat of animals killed in the Mohammedan fashion (*halal*); a true Sikh must respect and honour all women and be faithful to his wife. A Sikh must learn Gurmukhi and should acquire other education from wherever and from whomsoever it may be available. A true Sikh must shun the company of other's wife, gambling, falsehood, theft, wine, and give up *panj vikars* (five evils—*kam, karodh, lobh, moh, ahankar*). He should not speak evil of any of the various religions current in the world. In administering justice a Sikh should not accept bribe, nor should he bear false testimony. Thus alone a Sikh can acquire a good name in the world.¹⁸

The *Rehatnama of Bhai Chaupa Singh* bears significant testimony to the personal behaviour of a Sikh and the philosophy of life as propagated by Guru Gobind Singh. It records—A Sikh should regard the mouth of a poor man as the Guru's receptacle. In every Sikh village there should be *dharamshala* (house of God) where congregations should be held and travellers and strangers, should find food and rest. All affairs and disputes concerning the Sikhs should be settled among the Sikhs themselves. Any debtor who tries to evade his obligation is fit for heavy penalty. Any one who breaks his promise, or hates others, incurs a heavy fine.¹⁹

Guru Gobind Singh laid stress on education and knowledge for self-realisation and enlightenment. He considered education as a divine virtue for attainment of perfection and purity. According to him it bestows Divine Grace through concentrating on the remembrance of the True Lord, because God is the abode of wisdom.²⁰ Firm faith and true devotion of God annihilates sorrow, sufferings, and diseases.²¹ It is evident from the writings of Guru Gobind Singh that he advocated the philosophy of cultivating an attitude of all around development of the personality rather than in the performance of dogmatic rituals and mechanical acts of worship. The Guru said :

Without performing good deeds
and developing a perfect love for the Lord
none can realise Him with honour.²²

For inculcating virtues of bravery, patriotism and nationalism the Guru got prepared heroic literature from popular classics of *Puranic* literature and Ancient Indian religious texts. (to build up ethos and higher virtues for the character of the Sikh people). For this purpose Guru Gobind Singh engaged fifty two poets of scholarship and learning. The Guru himself contributed enormous writings with a patriotic fervour, tenacity of purpose, will power, strong determination, sense of perseverance and undaunted spirit that welcomed suffering as means of salvation. Guru Gobind Singh's following patriotic song is still very popular among the Indian masses and is considered as a talisman in times of crisis. It reads :

O Lord! Give me Thy Blessings
that, I may not be deterred from meritorious deeds,
that, I may not be afraid of the adversary,
when I go out to fight and,
that, I may win through faith, my inner
conscience remaining as my guide,
I crave that, I may ever sing Thy praises
and when the last moment comes,
I may fall fighting heroically in the battlefield.²³

Wonderful was the transformation the Guru brought in the psyche of the people. The Guru became a symbol of patriotism. Thousands followed his call and fought by his side but with human dignity that produced compassion in their hearts even for the enemy. Various oral traditions pertaining to this subject are accounted in popular folk-literature of the Punjab.

The Guru was the champion of the downtrodden, suppressed and suffering humanity. He took up the sword to defend their cause. In his ideology the Guru has equated the sword with God.²⁴ The sword was to become a symbol of power, self-respect, dignity and shield for self-defence and for the protection of the weak and oppressed.²⁵ However, according to him non-violence and love must remain the rule, while the sword had its justification only in exceptional cases, when the cause was just and great and when other remedies had been tried without yielding results. The

Bhagauti, *Kirpan* or Sword was never intended as a means of violence but as a symbol of resistance to evil when other ways to overcome evil had been tried without producing results. It was to become a shield for the protection of *Dharma* which included protection of justice, truth and righteousness. The Guru was able to gather all sections of the people under his banner against evil. He organised them into one strong unit, and equipped them with arms and defensive measures. He infused in them the spirit of patriotism and made them ready to fight for the honour of the country. Like Guru Nanak who condemned the atrocities of the invasion of Babar on Hindustan and lamented the fall of the nation (*Babar bani*). Guru Gobind Singh was also deeply concerned with the atrocities of the Mughal rulers and misfortune of the Indian masses. The fervour of nationalism was so strong in the Guru that he openly challenged the entry of Emperor Aurangzeb to attack the land of Punjab in his letter *Fatehnama* (a part of *Zafarnama*).²⁶

Guru Gobind Singh played a significant part in the destiny of the country. He was able to provide to his followers a distinct identity and a strong sense of unity. He invoked in his people a new vision and a new hope, ethos of nationhood and pride of patriotism. He gave them an iron will and embedding resolution to stand firm and make sacrifices in all privation and adversaries. In this context, it is necessary to mention a few words about the literary contributions of Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru was a poet par-excellence. He was master of languages (Braj, Punjabi, Persian and Arabic). He had attained excellency in the art of poetics and prose. The Guru has composed a considerably large literature. Most of his writings are in verse except his letters called *Hukamnamas* (epistles addressed to different Sikh *sangats* scattered all over the country). His poetry is considered unparalleled in Hindi Literature. His literary works bear the stamp of his versatile genius and enduring relevance of his philosophy of life. The Guru lent his personal touch to the conventional themes from the Puranic Lore to serve his mission.

Guru Gobind Singh's famous compositions—*Jaap Sahib*, *Akal Ustat*, *Bachitra Natak*, *Chandi Charitra*, *Var Sri Bhagauti Ji Ki*, *Gyan Prabodh*, *Ramkali Patshahi 10*, *33 Sawayyas*, *Khalsa*

Mahima, Shastar Nam Mala, Shabad Hazare, Chaupai, and Zafarnama etc. are replete with verses reflecting his philosophy of life. The *Zafarnama* (literary means an epistle of victory) written to Emperor Aurangzeb in the Deccan and is considered as the most innovative treatise on the high standard of warfare and the morality of the state crafts. The *Zafarnama* tells us in so many words that Guru Gobind Singh had taken to the sword as the last resort and that he was willing to enter into peace negotiations with the emperor. The *Zafarnama* reflects the Guru's spirit of courage and high morale. It fearlessly condemnes what was unjust, cruel and inhuman in political dealings of the Mughal state. It exhorts what was true and morally righteous. The *Zafarnama* is the primary evidence on the Guru's attitude towards Emperor Aurangzeb and his State machinery. In candid and unambiguous terms the Guru castigated the immoral policy of the Emperor and his autocratic government. The Guru holds Aurangzeb responsible for the evil done.²⁷ The *Zafarnama* depicts clearly a charter of demands for liberty of conscience and of the right to get rid of religious and political bigotry and oppression. In *Zafarnama* Guru Gobind Singh unambiguously condemned the Emperor for his treachery, breach of faith and immoral dealings. The Guru exposed the tyrannies and sins of Aurangzeb and warned him of Divine Judgement :

For spilling the blood of innocent, ply not your blade;
Think of the Sword Divine, and then be afraid (of the
Lord's justice).²⁸

Through the *Zafarnama*, the Guru cautioned Aurangzeb of the futility of his expeditions against the Khalsa and reminded him about his wrong assessment of the strength of his fighting force. The Guru denounced that though so many of his Sikhs besides his four sons had been killed, he was still unconquered. The Guru wrote:

For what is the use of putting out a few sparks,
When you raise a mighty flame instead.²⁹

It meant that the task which the Guru had started had become a mass movement and therefore it could not be crushed by killing a few individuals. The Guru informed the Emperor that armed revolt against injustice is a moral duty and thus justified the use of

the sword for his mission. He declared :

When all peaceful methods fail,
It is justified to unsheathe the Sword,
Out of your scabbard and wield it with your hand.³⁰

The Guru reminded Aurangzeb of the law of retribution and the peril of the wheel of the time and the futility of the bloodshed of the innocent people :

Do not wantonly spill the blood of men,
for your own blood as surely will be split by death.³¹

Expressing his determination and firm faith in the Divine justice the Guru expounded :

If you rely on men and money,
my eyes are fixed on God, The Omnipotent;
If you pride yourself on power and pelf,
my refuge is God the immortal.³²

The *Zafarnama* emphatically reiterates the sovereignty of morality in the affairs of the state as much as in the conduct of individual human beings and regards the means as important as the end. It stresses that absolute truthfulness is as much the duty of the sovereign as of any one of the ordinary citizens. The *Zafarnama* is the contemporary historic document from the Guru's pen and provides us with a clear glimpse of the relations between the Guru and Emperor Aurangzeb. Above all, it gives us close view of the unbending spirit of the great Guru in the face of the most challenging circumstances.

The whole text of *Zafarnama* is a masterpiece of Persian poetics. It holds great interest for the readers as an important source of information on the lessons of history. All through the verses of the *Zafarnama*, Guru Gobind Singh exhorts emphatically to put Aurangzeb to shame by exposing his evil designs in the light of moral values and virtues of God whom the Emperor professes to worship and condemns his hypocrisy, dubious dealings, betrayal and breach of faith. The moral lesson that *Zafarnama* has for us is that in order to be happy, honest and virtuous we must be righteous

and truthful and never be misled by temptation of power and pelf which are temporary and false.³³

It is necessary to mention a few words about the relation of Guru Gobind Singh with Emperor Bahadur Shah, the successor of Aurangzeb. The issue has been misunderstood by some historians who say that the Guru joined the Mughal service under Bahadur Shah. There is no documentary evidence from contemporary or near contemporary sources in Punjabi or Persian that Guru Gobind Singh ever joined the services of the Mughals or accepted any official rank or position in the army of Bahadur Shah. This issue has been discussed in detail in the chapter 'Armed Struggle'. It is necessary to point out here that the service hypothesis does not harmonize with Guru Gobind Singh's character, ideology, career, philosophy of life, ethical values and firm conviction to fight for justice and righteousness with the help of the Divine Support (*Akal Purakh*) and the might of the Sword (*Sarab Loh*).³⁴ Even during his meeting with Emperor Bahadur Shah at Agra on 4 August 1707, the Guru was allowed to go fully armed into the emperor's presence. A robe of honour (*Khilat*) and *padak* (*medallion*) set with precious stones was given to him³⁵, such treatment at the royal court is self explanatory evidence of the independent status of Guru Gobind Singh and the special privilege given to him as no official not even the heir apparent to the Mughal throne was allowed to go armed in the presence of the Emperor. Guru Gobind Singh believed and practised in the doctrine of sovereignty of God and did not join the rank of Bahadur Shah. It is evidently clear from the writings of Guru Gobind Singh that his philosophy of life was deeply rooted in his Concept of the Divine. 'Jaap Sahib' is Guru Gobind Singh's most important and significant composition. Guru Gobind Singh's mystic vision cut across all man made barriers of caste, class, religions, race, time and space and various other cultural restraints which make divisions and create discriminations not only of the Divine but of the humanity also. The *bani* of *Jaap Sahib* is a documentary statement of this interpretation. Its message is cosmic and universal in nature, spirit and essence. It seeks cultural and emotional integration among various cultural and language groups.³⁶

In *Jaap Sahib*, Guru Gobind Singh has described attributes of God in all dimensions, physical and metaphysical, secular and spiritual, aesthetics and awe inspiring. God has been envisioned as the Chastiser of tyrants and the Destroyer of the wicked, the Creator of the Universe and the Lord is also revered as the Ultimate Annihilator. A glorious image of the Almighty is built up, replenished with grace, power and compassion. There is powerful undercurrent of emotional fervour enhanced with salvation and prayer of the Supreme Reality. It invokes the spirit of iron Will and supreme confidence and makes one feel the spark of spiritual experience in communion with God. The sacred words of *Jaap Sahib* have the authority of the *Akal Purakh* (Timeless God) and appear to be charged with the power of His blessings.

The inference derived from the attributes of God given in the *Jaap Sahib* is multifarious like the doctrine of anti-rituals and simple worship of the Lord, the doctrine of the Divine intervention in human history and the principle of Divine Justice. There is also an injunction to adherence of the Divine Order (*Hukam/Raza/Bhana*) and the concept of human endeavour, seeking the Divine Grace (*Mehar/Karam/Nadar/Bakhshis*) of the Almighty. Above all God is Love, full of *Anurag* and dispeller of the ignorance. We can have a better understanding of the *Jaap Sahib* if we are familiar with the cultural heritage and religious doctrines of its author as well as the perception of socio-political reality of the time in which it was composed. The national consciousness made the Guru meditate on the contemporary issues confronting the human existence in his times. If we concentrate our attention on the various religious traditions whose reflections we see in *Jaap Sahib* we would certainly realise the high level of spiritual knowledge of its author transcending all mundane philosophies of life. The image of Guru Gobind Singh's milieu and the conditions of human existence of his times can be visualised if we go through the contemporary historical accounts giving us glimpses of the time the Guru Gobind Singh. The writings of Shah Wali Ullah, a Muslim Scholar of the eighteenth century can greatly help us to reconstruct socio-cultural milieu of the age.³⁷ This Naqashbandi Scholar has most remorsefully lamented the

degradation and demoralization of the socio-political, economic and cultural conditions of the times of Emperor Aurangzeb. The failure of the centralized government, administrative corruption, collapse of bureaucratic structure (*mansabdari*) system of the Mughals, economic depression, loss of moral values, misuse of power in administrative machinery, the tendency of insurgency and revolt in governing class and army, rise of the immoral element in the society, loss of fear of God, the problem of law and order and the element of crime dominating the society etc. Of course, Shah Wali Ullah's concern is to bring back social stability, political consolidation and law and order in the society only through revival of Islamic values and adherence to *Hadis* and *Shara* and faith in the attributes of God as given in *Quran*. The fate of the non-muslim subjects was not within the perview of his concern. However, the background comes to our support to imagine the vision of the philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh aiming at reconstruction of the contemporary demoralised society. The Guru was much concerned with the contemporary social conflicts, presence of hostile elements, political oppression, spiritual decline, anti-religious, sectarian and pluralistic beliefs and practice of meaningless rituals, superstitions, magic and other sorts of inhuman practices. Guru Gobind Singh made it his mission to rejuvenate the Indian society with vigour of spiritual strength, secular and universal principles; and motivate the people to rise above the sectarian divisions, geographical, linguistic and cultural boundaries³⁸, and establish harmony and an integrated culture and to make the people adhere to the order of God—the cosmic law. The ultimate aim of the philosophy of life of Guru Gobind Singh is the unity of the soul with the immanent-the *Akal*.³⁹

For the achievement of this goal, Guru Gobind Singh laid great stress on the necessity of self-realization through the worship of the True Lord—who pervades everywhere. According to him; His grace is spread invincibly in all seven skies and the seven netherlands. His Divine Light enlightens the seekers of the Truth and helps the devotees to tread on the right path to reach their destination.⁴⁰ God destroys all maladies, miseries and evils. The Guru says, one who remembers Him for awhile with concentration

frees himself from the fear of death.⁴¹ The Guru reminds mortal beings about the futility of material possessions⁴² and preaches having firm faith in the bounties of the God who provides to all.⁴³ The Guru says :

God provides to all, why then waiver, O my mind
The Beauteous Lord will take care of thee also.⁴⁴

Even during his life time, Guru Gobind Singh was highly popular for his saintliness, magnetic personality, outstanding patriotism and supreme sacrifices. He won heart and soul of the people. Thousands joined his fold. He invoked in the people inner spiritual awakening, courage, fearlessness and bravery. He placed before them worthy ideals and noble impulses and pointed out to them the heights to which they were capable of rising.

A great spiritual saviour and emancipator of the suffering humanity, Guru Gobind Singh was also the political deliverer of the people of Punjab in whom he infused vitality, chivalry and martial spirit and thereby enabled them to fight against tyranny and to win back their honour, dignity and political freedom. It is most appropriate to believe the self-assessment of Guru Gobind Singh that God had chosen him to play a terrific role in the drama of life.⁴⁵

The Guru's teachings had the magical effect of transforming the pariah and weak persons into brave and fearless soldiers. The Guru was a lion himself and created in others the hearts of lions. It is said about him, that, he infused such strength in meek sparrows that they could defeat the hawks. The legend reads :

I shall cause sparrow to break the hawks.
Then alone shall I have the justification,
For being called Gobind Singh.⁴⁶

It is clearly evident from the writings of Guru Gobind Singh that he was also a lover of nature. The Guru shows his deep concern for the preservation and conservation of the eco-systems of the nature in order to protect the cosmic unity of the universe which is the creation of the God. Guru Gobind Singh believes that the Almighty manifests Himself in Nature, therefore nature is the wonderful gift of God.⁴⁷

The significance of the teachings of Guru Gobind Singh in the realm of intellectual and moral approaches to the problems of human existence and the art of living may be considered as the most significant contribution of his times. In this context Guru Gobind Singh had been rightly evaluated as the Father of his age.⁴⁸

Guru Gobind Singh's life is a matter of historic and national significance. He not only protected the glorious cultural heritage of our multi-national country but had also introduced new innovations pertaining to social change and social transformation and a universal value pattern through his unique and practical philosophy of life.

Notes and References:

1. ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਜਗਤਿ ਕਹਾ ਸੋ ਕਹਿ ਹੈ ॥
ਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਲੋਗ ਤੇ ਮੋਨਿ ਨ ਰਹਿਓ ॥੩੩॥
'Akal Purakh Bach', Chaupai 33, Bachitar Natak, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 57.
2. ਨ ਕਾਨ ਕਾਹੂ ਕੀ ਧਰੋ ॥
ਕਹਿਯੋ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਸੁ ਮੈਂ ਕਰੋ ॥੩੬॥

-Ibid.
3. ਧੰਨ ਜੀਓ ਤਿਹ ਕੋ ਜਗ ਮੈ
ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਚਿੱਤ ਮੈ ਜੁਧੁ ਬਿਚਾਰੈ ॥
ਦੇਹ ਅਨਿੱਤ ਨ ਨਿੱਤ ਰਹੈ
ਜਸੁ ਨਾਵ ਚੜੈ ਭਵ ਸਾਗਰ ਤਾਰੈ ॥
ਧੀਰਜ ਧਾਮ ਬਨਾਇ ਇਹੈ ਤਨ ਬੁੱਧਿ ਸੁ ਦੀਪਕ ਜਿਓ ਉਜੀਆਰੈ ॥
ਗਿਆਨਹਿ ਕੀ ਬਢਨੀ ਮਨਹੁ ਹਾਥ ਲੈ
ਕਾਤਰਤਾ ਕੁਤਵਾਰ ਬੁਹਾਰੈ ॥੨੪੯॥
'Sri Krishan Avtar', Bachitar Natak, *Dasam Granth*, Vol-I, p. 570.
4. ਖਲਕ ਖਾਲਿਕ ਕੀ ਜਾਣ ਕੇ ਖਲਕ ਦੁਖਾਵੈ ਨਾਹਿ ॥
ਖਲਕ ਦੁਖੇ ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲ ਜੀ ਖਾਲਿਕ ਕੋਧੈ ਤਾਹਿ ॥੪੯॥
-*Tankhahnama Bhai Nand Lal Ji* in *Bhai Nand Lal Granthawali*, Ed. Ganda Singh, Pub. Malaka Malaysia, 1968, p. 198.
5. ਸਾਚੁ ਕਹੋ ਸੁਨ ਲੋਹੁ ਸਭੈ
ਜਿਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮੁ ਕੀਓ ਤਿਨ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪਾਇਓ ॥੨੯॥
'Akal Ustat', *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 14.

6. ਜੇ ਹਮ ਕੋ ਪਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ ਉਚਰਿ ਹੈ ॥
 ਤੇ ਸਭ ਨਰਕਿ ਕੁੰਡ ਮਾਹਿ ਪਰਿ ਹੈ ॥
 ਮੋ ਕੋ ਦਾਸੁ ਤਵਨ ਕਾ ਜਾਨੋ ॥
 ਯਾ ਮੈਂ ਭੇਦੁ ਨ ਰੰਚ ਪਛਾਨੋ ॥੩੨॥

'Akal Purakh Bach', Chaupai, Bachitar Natak, *Dasam Granth*,
 Vol. I, p. 57.

7. ਸੰਕਟ ਹਰਨ ਸਭ ਸਿੱਧਕੀ ਕਰਨ ਚੰਡ ਤਾਰਨ
 ਤਰਨ ਸ਼ਰਨ ਲੋਚਨ ਬਿਸਾਲ ਹੈ ॥
 ਆਦਿ ਜਾਕੈ ਆਹਮ ਹੈ ਅੰਤ ਕੋ ਨ
 ਪਾਰਾਵਾਰ ਸ਼ਰਨ ਉਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਨ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਲ ਹੈ ॥
 ਅਸੁਰ ਸੰਘਾਰਨ ਅਨਿਕ ਭੁਖ ਜਾਰਨ
 ਸੋ ਪਤਿਤ ਉਧਾਰਨ ਛਡਾਏ ਜਮਜਾਲ ਹੈ ॥
 ਦੇਵੀ ਬਰ ਲਾਇਕ ਸਬੰਧਿਯੂ ਕੀ ਦਾਇਕ ਸੁ ਦੇਹ
 ਬਰ ਪਾਇਕ ਬਨਾਵੈ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਹਾਲ ਹੈ ॥੨॥

Krishan Avtar, *Sri Dasam Granth Ji*, Vol. I, p. 255.

8. Bhai Gurdas 2nd explains the advent of Guru Gobind Singh as a warrior
 for the spiritual emancipation of the world :
 ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਮੀਤ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਪੁਰਖੋਤਮ ਪੂਰਾ ।
 ਪੋਖਨਹਾਰਾ ਪਤਿਸਾਹ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਲਨ ਊਰਾ ।
 ਪਤਿਤ ਉਧਾਰਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਨਪਤਿ ਸਦ ਸਦਾ ਹਜੂਰਾ ।
 ਵਹ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿਓ ਪੁਰਖ ਭਗਵੰਤ ਰੂਪ ਗੁਰ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਤ ਸੂਰਾ ॥

-*Varan Bhai Gurdas*, Var 41, Pauri 14, p. 666.

Also :

ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿਓ ਦਸਵਾਂ ਅਵਤਾਰਾ ।
 ਜਿਨ ਅਲਖ ਅਪਾਰ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਾ ਜਪਿਓ ਕਰਤਾਰਾ ।
 ਨਿਜ ਪੰਥ ਚਲਾਇਓ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਧਰਿ ਤੇਜ ਕਰਾਰਾ ।

-*Ibid*, Pauri 15, pp. 666-667.

Also :

ਉਹ ਗੁਰ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਸਵਾਂ ਅਵਤਾਰਾ ।
 ਜਿਨ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਅਚਿੰਤ ਸੁਧਾਰਾ ।
 ਤੁਰਕ ਟੁਸਟ ਸਭ ਮਾਰਿ ਬਿਦਾਰੇ ।

ਸਭ ਪ੍ਰਥਵੀ ਕੀਨੀ ਗੁਲਜਾਰੇ ।

Ibid., Pauri 24, p. 673.

Sainapat, the court poet of Guru Gobind Singh pronounced the mission
 of his life as :

ਗੁਰ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਗੁਰ ਕਰਨਹਾਰ ਕਰਤਾਰ ॥
 ਜਗਤ ਉਧਾਰਨ ਆਇਓ ਜਾਨਹੁ ਸਬ ਸੰਸਾਰ ॥੧੨੯॥

Sainapat, *Sri Guru Sobha*, p. 25.

9. ਹਮ ਇਹ ਕਾਜ ਜਗਤ ਮੋ ਆਏ ॥
ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਪਠਾਏ ॥
ਜਹਾਂ ਤਹਾਂ ਤੁਮ ਧਰਮ ਬਿਥਾਰੋ ॥
ਦੁਸ਼ਟ ਦੋਖਿਯਨਿ ਪਕਰਿ ਪਛਾਰੋ ॥੪੨॥
ਯਾਹੀ ਕਾਜ ਧਰਾ ਹਮ ਜਨਮੰ ॥
ਸਮਝ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਾਧੂ ਸਭ ਮਨਮੰ ॥
ਧਰਮ ਚਲਾਵਨ ਸੰਤ ਉਧਾਰਨ ॥
ਦੁਸ਼ਟ ਸਭਨ ਕੋ ਮੂਲ ਉਪਾਰਨ ॥੪੩॥
'Akal Purakh Bach', Chaupai, Bachitar Natak,
Sri Dasam Granth, Vol. I, pp. 57-58.
10. *Dasam Granth*, p. 570.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.
12. ਭਈ ਜੀਤ ਮੇਰੀ ॥ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਾਲ ਕੇਰੀ ॥੩੪॥
'Bachitar Natak', *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 62.
13. ਮੇਰ ਕਰੋ ਤ੍ਰਿਣ ਤੇ ਮੁਹਿ ਜਾਹਿ ਗਰੀਬ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਨ ਦੁਸਰ ਤੋਸੋ ॥
ਭੁਲ ਛਿਮੋ ਹਮਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਆਪਨ ਭੂਲਨਹਾਰ ਕਹੂੰ ਕੋਊ ਮੋਸੋ ॥
ਸੇਵ ਕਰੀ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਸਭਿ ਹੀ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਦੇਖੀਅਤ ਦੁੱਖ ਭਰੋਸੋ ॥
ਯਾ ਕਲ ਮੈ ਸਭ ਕਾਲ, ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨ ਕੇ ਭਾਰੀ ਭੁਜਾਨ ਕੋ ਭਾਰੀ ਭਰੋਸੋ ॥੯੨॥
Sri Mukh Vak Patshai 10, Bachitar Natak,
Dasam Granth, Vol. I, p. 45.
14. See Guru Gobind Singh's views about ethics of war depicted in his letter *Zafarnama* written to Emperor Aurangzeb and Sikh rules of conduct recorded in *Rehatnamas*.
15. ਹਰੀ ਚੰਦ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ॥ ਹਨੇ ਸੂਰ ਸੁੱਧੋ ॥
ਭਲੇ ਬਾਣ ਬਾਹੇ ॥ ਬਡੇ ਸੈਨ ਗਾਹੇ ॥੧੩॥
'Raj Saj Kathnam', Bachitar Natak,
Sri Dasam Granth, Vol. I., pp. 60-61.
16. ਚੁ ਕਾਰ ਅਜ ਹਮਰ ਹੀਲਤੋ ਦਰ ਗੁਜਸਤ ॥
ਹਲਾਲ ਅਸਤੁ ਬੁਰਦਨ ਬ ਸਮਸ਼ੇਰ ਦਸਤ ॥੨੨॥
When the affairs are past all other remedies
then, as a last resort, it is justified to unsheath the sword
Sri Mukh Vak Patshahi 10, *Zafarnama* (Persian),
Sri Dasam Granth, Vol. II, p. 1390.
17. *Tankhahnama of Bhai Nand Lal* in *Bhai Nand Lal Granthawali*, Ed. Ganda Singh, Pub. Malaka, Malaysia, 1968, pp. 195-199; also Piara Singh Padam, *Rehatnama*, Pub. Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1995- pp. 57-60

18. *Rehatnama of Bhai Desa Singh* in Piara Singh Padam, *Rehatnama*, pp. 128-133.
19. *Rehatnama of Bhai Chaupa Singh*, Piara Singh Padam, *Rehatnama*, pp. 77-117; Shamsheer Singh Ashok, *Guru Khalse de Rehatnama*, Sikh History Research Board, unpublished Mss., 1979, pp. 1-47.
20. ਬਿਦਯਾ ਕੇ ਬਿਚਾਰ ਹੋ ਕਿ ਅੱਢੇ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਹੋ
ਕਿ ਸਿੱਧਤਾ ਕੀ ਸੂਰਤ ਹੋ ਕਿ ਸੁੱਧਤਾ ਕੀ ਸਾਨ ਹੈ ॥
Akal Ustat 19, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 13.
ਕਹੂੰ ਬਿਦਯਾ ਕੇ ਬਿਚਾਰੀ ॥
Akal Ustat 13, *Ibid.*
ਕਹੂੰ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬਾਦ ਕਹੂੰ ਬਿਦਯਾ ਕੋ ਬਿਖਾਦ.....॥
Akal Ustat 20, *Ibid.*, p. 13.
ਸਿੱਧ ਕੋ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਬੁੱਧ ਕੋ ਬਿਭੂਤ ਹੈ ।
Akal Ustat 260, *Ibid.*, p. 37.
ਬੁੱਧ ਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਧਤਾ ਕੋ ਬਾਸ ਹੈ
ਕਿ ਬੁੱਧ ਹੂੰ ਕੋ ਘਰੁ ਹੈ ॥
Akal Ustat 261, *Ibid.*, p. 37.
ਸਰਬ ਬਿਦਯਾ ਕੇ ਉਦਾਰ ਹੈ ਅਪਾਰ ਕਹੀਅਤੁ ਹੈ ॥
Akal Ustat, 256, *Ibid.*, p. 36.
ਮਹਾਂ ਬੁੱਧ ਕੇ ਦਿਵਯਾ ਮਹਾਂ ਮਾਨ ਹੂੰ ਕੇ ਮਾਨ ਹੈ ॥
ਗਯਾਨ ਹੂੰ ਕੇ ਗਯਾਤਾ ਮਹਾਂ ਬੁੱਧਤਾ ਕੇ ਦਾਤਾ ॥੨੫੬॥
Akal Ustat 253, *Ibid.*, p. 36.
ਸਦਾ ਸਰਬਦਾ ਸਿੱਧਦਾ ਬੁੱਧਿ ਧਾਮ ॥
Gian Prabodh 3, *Ibid.*, p. 127.
21. ਰੋਗ ਸੋਗ ਕੇ ਮਿੱਟਯਾ.....
Akal Ustat 19, *Ibid.*, p. 13.
22. ਪੂਰਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਉ ਬਿਨਾ ਪਤਿ ਸਿਉ
ਕਿਨ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਪਦਮਾਪਤਿ ਪਾਏ ॥ Akal Ustat 245, *Ibid.*, p. 34.
23. ਦੇਹ ਸ਼ਿਵਾ ਬਰ ਮੋਹਿ ਇਹੋ ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮਨ ਤੇ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਨ ਟਰੋ ॥
ਨ ਡਰੋ ਅਰਿ ਸੋ ਜਬ ਜਾਇ ਲਰੋ ਨਿਸਚੈ ਕਰ ਅਪਨੀ ਜੀਤ ਕਰੋ ॥
ਅਰੁ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੋ ਆਪਨੇਹੀ ਮਨ ਕੋ ਇਹ ਲਾਲਚ ਹਉ ਗੁਨ ਤਉ ਉਚਰੋ ॥
ਜਬ ਆਵ ਕੀ ਅਉਧ ਨਿਧਾਨ ਬਨੈ ਅਤਿ ਹੀ ਰਨ ਮੈ ਤਬ ਜੂਝ ਮਰੋ ॥੨੩੧॥
Epilogue to 'Chandi Charitar', *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 99.
24. In the beginning of the 'Bachitar Natak' Guru Gobind Singh announced :
ਨਮਸਕਾਰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਖੜਗ ਕੋ ਕਰੋ ਸੁ ਹਿਤੁ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਇ ॥

I bow with love and devotion to the Holy Sword,
Assist me that I may complete my task.

Sri Mukh Vak, Patshahi 10, Bachitar Natak,
Sri Dasam Granth, Vol. I, p. 39.

This hymn of Guru Gobind Singh is the opening part of the *Ardas* (Congregational prayer of the Sikhs).

25. Guru Gobind Singh pronounced :

ਖਗ ਖੰਡ ਬਿਹੰਡ ਖਲ ਦਲ ਖੰਡੇ ਅਤਿ ਰਣ ਮੰਡੇ ਬਰਬੰਡੇ ॥
ਭੂਜ ਦੰਡ ਅਖੰਡ ਤੇਜ ਪ੍ਰਚੰਡ ਜੋਤਿ ਅਮੰਡੇ ਭਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਭੇ ॥
ਸੁਖ ਸੰਤਾ ਕਰਣੇ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਦਰਣੇ ਕਿਲਬਿਖ ਹਰਣੇ ਅਸ ਸਰਣੇ ॥
ਜੈ ਜੈ ਜਗ ਕਾਰਣ ਸਿਸਟ ਉਬਾਰਣ ਮਮ ਪ੍ਰਿਤਿਪਾਰਣ ਜੈ ਤੇਗੰ ॥੨॥

Sword, that smiteth in a flesh,
That scatters the armies of the wicked
In the great battlefield,
O, thou the Symbol of the brave
Thine arm is irresistible, dazzling like the Sun;
Sword, Thou art of the protector of saints,
thou art the scourge of the wicked;
Scatterer of sinners, Saviour and Sustainer
Hail to Thee, Sword Supreme

Sri Mukh Vak, Patshahi 10, Bachitar Natak, *Dasam Granth*, p. 39.

26. See 'Fatehnama' or 'Nama-i-Guru Gobind Singh' in *Tarikh-i-Makhli-i-Sikhan*, Ed. Ganda Singh, Punjab History Society, Khalsa College, Amritsar, 1949, Couplet No. 13, p. 63.
27. See various couplets of *Zafarnama*, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. II, pp., 1389-1427.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*
34. ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਦੀ ਰੱਛਾ ਹਮਨੈ ॥
ਸਰਬ ਲੋਹ ਦੀ ਰੱਛਿਆ ਹਮਨੈ ।

Akal Ustat, *Sri Dasam Granth Sahib*, Vol. I, p. 11.

35. See *Akhbarat-i-darbar-i-mu'alla* (Reports from Emperor Bahadur Shah's Court 1707-10), preserved at the Imperial Court of Sawai Raja Jai Singh of Amber and now preserved at Rajasthan State Archives.

Extracts given in Ganda Singh's *Makhaz-i-Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*, Pub. Sikh History Society, Amritsar, 1949, Vol. I, pp. 82-85. See also Irfan Habib's article 'Guru Gobind Singh and the Sikhs of the Khalsa, Reports from Bahadur Shah's Court 1707-1710', Pub. in *Sikh History From Persian Sources*, Eds. J.S. Grewal and Irfan Habib, Pub. Tulika, Indian History Congress, New Delhi, 2001, p. 106. The translation of the entry is given as following :

"5 Jumada I.R.Y.I. (4 August 1707)

Gobind the Nanaki came armed, in accordance with orders, and presented himself, making an offering of 100 *ashrafis* [Gold coins]. A robe of honour and *padak* [medaillon], set with precious stone, was given to him, and he was permitted to leave."

36. Madanjit Kaur, article on *Jaap Sahib* in *Guru Gobind Singh Jeevan ate Chintan*, Pub. Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar, 2000.
37. Shah Waliullah, *Al-Budur-Al-Bazigah*, Eng. Trans. by G.N. Galbani, Pub. National Hizra Council Islamabad, Pakistan, 1985, also see A.P. Muztar, *Shah Wali Allah : A Saint Scholar of Muslim India*, Islamabad, Pakistan, 1979.
38. Akal Ustat, 255-262, 266, *Dasam Granth*, pp. 36-38.
39. *Akal Ustat*, *Ibid.*, pp. 11-35.
40. ਬਨ ਤਨ ਮਹੀਪ ਜਲ ਬਲ ਮਹਾਨ ।
ਜਹ ਤਹ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਹ ਕਰੁਵਾਨਿਧਾਨ ।
ਜਗਮਗਤ ਤੇਜ ਪੁਰਨ ਪ੍ਰਤਾਪ ।
ਅੰਬਰ ਜਮੀਨ ਜਿਹ ਜਪਤ ਜਾਪ ॥
ਸਾਤੋ ਅਕਾਸ਼ ਸਾਤੋ ਪਤਾਰ ।
ਬਿਬਰਿਓ ਅਦ੍ਰਿਸਟ ਜਿਹ ਕਰਮ ਜਾਰਿ

Akal Ustat, 271, 272, *Dasam Granth*, p.38.

41. ਸਭ ਕੋ ਕਾਲ ਸਭਨ ਕੋ ਕਰਤਾ ।
ਰੋਗ ਸੋਗ ਦੇਖਨ ਕੋ ਹਰਤਾ ।
ਏਕ ਚਿੱਤ ਜਿਹ ਇਕ ਛਿਨ ਧਯਾਇਓ ।
ਕਾਲ ਫਾਸ ਕੇ ਬੀਚ ਨ ਆਇਓ ॥

Akal Ustat-10, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p.11.

42. Akal Ustat 22, *Ibid.*, p.12.
43. Akal Ustat 27, *Ibid.*, p.14.
44. ਕਾਹੇ ਕੇ ਡੋਲਤ ਹੈ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਸੁਖ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਪਦਮਾਪਤਿ ਲੈ ਹੈ ॥

ਰੋਗਨ ਤੇ ਅਰ ਸੋਗਨ ਤੇ ਜਲ ਜੋਗਨ ਤੇ ਬਹੁ ਭਾਂਤਿ ਬਚਾਵੈ ॥

Akal Ustat, 247, 248, *Ibid.*, p. 35.

45. ਮੈ ਅਪਨਾ ਸੁਤ ਤੋਹਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ॥
ਪਥੁ ਪ੍ਰਚੁਰ ਕਰਬੇ ਕੱਧ ਸਾਜਾ ॥
ਜਾਹਿ ਤਹਾ ਤੈ ਧਰਮੁ ਚਲਾਇ ॥
ਕਬੁਧਿ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਲੋਕ ਹਟਾਇ ॥੨੯॥
ਠਾਢ ਭਯੋ ਮੈ ਜੋਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਬਚਨ ਕਹਾ ਸਿਰ ਨਯਾਇ ॥
ਪੰਥ ਚਲੈ ਤਬ ਜਗਤ ਮੈ ਜਬ ਤੁਮ ਕਰਹੁ ਸਹਾਇ ॥੩੦॥
'Akai Purakh Bach', Chaupai, Bachitar Natak, *Dasam Granth*, p. 57.

46. ਸਵਾ ਲਾਖ ਸੇ ਏਕ ਲੜਾਊ ॥
ਚਿੜੀਓ ਸੇ ਮੈ ਬਾਜ਼ ਤੁੜਾਊ ॥
ਤਬੈ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਮ ਕਹਾਊ ॥
Popular Punjabi saying attributed to the martial impact of Guru Gobind Singh. Bhai Nand Lal attributes this miracle of the Guru as following :
ਸਵਾ ਲਾਖ ਸੇ ਏਕ ਲੜਾਊ
ਚੜ੍ਹੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਤਿਸ ਮੁਕਤ ਕਹਾਊ ॥

'Tankhahnama Bhai Nand Lal Ji', *Bhai Nand Lal Granthawali*, Ed. Ganda Singh, Malaka, Malisiya, p. 199.

47. ਜਹ ਤਹ ਮਹੀਪ ਬਨ ਤਨ ਪ੍ਰਫੁੱਲ ।
ਸੋਭਾ ਬਸੰਤ ਜੱਹ ਤਹ ਪ੍ਰਫੁੱਲ ।
ਬਨ ਤਨ ਦੁਰੰਤ ਖਗ ਮ੍ਰਿਗ ਮਹਾਨ ।
ਜਹ ਤਹ ਪ੍ਰਫੁੱਲ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਸੁਜਾਨ ॥੨੬੮॥
ਫੁਲਤ ਪ੍ਰਫੁੱਲ ਲਹਿਲਹਿਤ ਮੋਰ ॥
ਸਿਰ ਚੁਰਹਿ ਜਾਨ ਮਨਮਥ ਚੋਰ ॥
ਕੁਦਰਤ ਕਮਾਲ ਰਾਜਕ ਰਹੀਮ ।
ਕਰੁਣਾਨਿਧਾਨ ਕਾਮਲ ਕਰੀਮ ॥੨੬੯॥

Akal Ustat, 268, 269, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p.38.

48. Bhai Gurdas 2nd expresses his tribute to Guru Gobind Singh as following :
ਵਾਹ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿਓ ਮਰਦ ਅਗੰਮਜ਼ਾ ਵਰੀਆਮ ਇਕੋਲਾ ॥
ਵਾਹ ਵਾਹ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਪੇ ਗੁਰ ਚੇਲਾ ॥੨੭॥

Varan Bhai Gurdas, Var 41, Pauri 17, p. 669.

SOCIAL VISION AND HUMANISM OF GURU GOBIND SINGH

Sikh religion is an organised collective institution of devotion to Supreme Reality (Truth) through service of humanity. It gives the individual disciple a broad vision to see life in its true perspective and act righteously. In Sikhism, society is the centre of moral and creative action. The primary aim of Sikhism as a way of life is to create social solidarity with spiritual orientation for promoting kinmanship between man and man, and between man and society through *sangati jivan* (community life) and to establish unity between man and God through *nam simran* (collective devotion). This spiritual dimension of the social philosophy of Sikhism helps the seeker of Truth to realise the existence of God in every sphere of life and consider the whole humanity as equal. It must be borne in mind that society is a human structure whose basic unit is the personal life of an individual. An enlightened, civilized and humanitarian society has to survive on the foundation of high moral and social values. For this purpose enormous efforts have to be made to protect virtues and punish vices in the society. The Sikh Gurus realised that a true religion has to be developed on the platform of society (with a humanitarian outlook) where multi-religious, multi-lingual, multi-racial groups and people of different creeds, race and geographical areas mingle with each other and even come into conflict with one another for the protection of their identity, freedom of faith and

human rights. Therefore, interaction between religion and society is inevitably based on the humanism in Sikh religion. This is why the Sikh Gurus presented a distinct social philosophy and a comprehensive political vision which is obviously different from the fundamental concepts of the semitic and oriental religions of the world. This aspect of Sikhism is of tremendous importance in the development of the whole course of the Sikh history.

The seed ideas and guidelines of the social philosophy and humanism as propagated by the Sikh Gurus are enshrined in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, the scripture of the Sikhs.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib sanctioned humanitarianism as a religious practice and promoted it as a living skill amongst its followers through creating an awareness and sense of moral duty amidst its devotees to serve humanity with love, affection and respect without distinction of gender, race, social status, nationalities or religious orientations. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is the first interfaith scripture in the world. It uses interfaith language and promotes co-operation between people of different faiths. This Holy Book of the Sikh strongly advocates the creation of a spirit of integration and harmony in a pluralistic society and portrays an earnest desire to pray for the welfare of the global society (*sarbat da bhala*) thus creating a feeling of international brotherhood.

Voluntary service (*seva*) is the fundamental doctrine of Sikhism. Its impact on Sikh society is evident from the observation that true Sikhs are ever ready to earnestly render their service finding opportunities to help the, poor, needy and weaker sections of the society or people in distress on account of natural calamities or victim of violence etc. The Sikhs worship their deity as the shelter for homeless and helper of disadvantaged (*nithawain da than, niotian di ot*).

Sri Guru Granth Sahib emphasizes altruistic actions as a means of rise above the animalistic instincts and shedding the ego to reach the cosmic consciousness and attain spirituality. It professes the doctrine of attaining salvation during one's own life by serving God through the service of His men and meditating on the name of God. The basic tenet of Sikh religion is *Nam Japo* (meditate on the

Divine Name), *Kirat Karo* (earning with honest means) and *Wand Ke Chhako* (share your earning with fellow human beings). It's world-view is life affirming and ethical with a progressive social vision. The Sikh value system highly emphasizes universal humanitarianism; in total contrast with various religions propagating exclusive cultural patterns. With its constituents of charity, compassion and selfless service (*nishkam seva*), the lesson of altruism has always been a laudable ideal life for Sikhs. It implies service by one's own hands, physical labour, donations, sharing of wealth, material sources and also demands some measures of sacrifice. The foundation stone of the social philosophy of Sikhism was laid by Guru Nanak; the successor Gurus consolidated the infrastructure of the Sikh social institutions and the Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh gave it the final touch to make the social and cultural edifice of Sikhism a living and lasting revolutionary movement.

In his autobiography, 'Apni Katha', *Bachitar Natak*, Guru Gobind Singh announced his divinely sanctioned mission of life as:

Be informed, O! men of God.
of the reason for my birth into this world.
It is, to propagate righteousness.
To uphold holy men everywhere,
And to root out evil doers, one and all.¹

According to the fundamental doctrines of Sikhism preached by Guru Nanak, it is as immoral to tolerate evil as to perpetuate it, and as unethical to tolerate injustice as to commit it. To fight against evil and injustice, inequality and tyranny is the heroic dimension of spiritual life (*Asa di Var*, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*). The Sikh ideal of spiritual life is not only to be a saint-at-peace but also to be God's Knight-at-arms. Guru Gobind Singh's life and thought provides a towering model of this sublime combination.

Guru Gobind Singh's life is an Odyssey of continuous conflict with evil and injustice. His autobiography (*Bachitar Natak*) is, therefore, a revealing picture of love, heroism, wars and self-sacrifice for the protection of his mission of life – the *Dharam Yudh* (war for the protection of righteousness). Every war that Guru

Gobind Singh fought was a *Dharam Yudh* invariably waged in defence of truth and justice. He was never the first to start war, nor did he ever try to encroach upon anyone's territory.

One of the most fascinating aspects of Guru Gobind Singh's social philosophy is undoubtedly his humanism. The Guru was a prophet preaching equality and fraternity. He was a man of revolutionary vision and decided to create a new social order, spiritually so strong and in mind so resolute and fearless that no tyrant would dare trample it. The Guru envisaged that, in the new social order, every human being should be equally privileged, with no discriminatory distinction such as those of caste, class, creed, race or nationality. In this social order, every individual would lead a dignified self-depended life committed to the service of humanity and welfare of all the mankind. It was to be an order based on the doctrine of Unity of One Loving God, equality of mankind, fraternity in faith, dignity of labour and disciplined freedom. The Guru declared its creation on the Baisakhi day at Sri Anandpur Sahib on March 30, 1699.

The *Order of the Khalsa* (pure or holy and God's very own) was announced in spectacular way to a large assembly of Sikhs who had come from various corners of the Indian Sub-continent. The Khalsa was given a new identity and a form – *Sant Sipahi* (saint-soldier) committed to die for the fulfilment of the Divine Order (*Hukam*), to serve the children of God without any discrimination and lead a strictly disciplined life professing and practicing righteousness as their Divine Mission. Therefore, we see that Khalsa is a unique socio-spiritual organisation embodying the great Sikh principle of *Miri-Piri* (a harmonious combination of the spiritual and temporal components of life) introduced by Guru Hargobind on the seed ideas inculcated by Guru Nanak (founder of the Sikh Faith), culminating into a glorious movement of subaltern masses for universal brotherhood, justice, equality and a new piety. The blending of *Miri* and *Piri* was consummated by Guru Gobind Singh in the creation of the Khalsa Panth, a republican set-up, sovereign both religiously and politically.

There is no doubt that in the mission of Guru Gobind Singh

there is a great concern for man and the society. The facts of the social philosophy of life of Guru Gobind Singh must be put in the right perspective. Guru Gobind Singh's humanism is different from that of the humanism of the west in the sense that the former is 'theo-centric' while the later is anthropocentric. In Guru Gobind Singh's concept of humanism there is a combination of mystic vision of God and social upliftment based on ethical realism. Here man establishes relationship with the Ultimate Reality, but at the same time he does not move out of historical time. He transcends the temporal order yet at the same time leads a religious life which is primarily social and ethical. We know that humanism is always based on religious content. Even Greek humanism as expressed in Plato's dialogues emerged out of the mystical aspects of the religious background of Apollo and Dionysus. In the Western world, the humanism has always been of the Christian spirit. The humanism of Guru Gobind Singh is also essentially religious but its means are social and practical. Its goal is to return to the spiritual origin i.e. God, but not by way of speculative thought, but by way of concrete transformation of inner self through service of humanity. Guru Gobind Singh thus, postulates for man not only the process of inner transformation (*through nam simran*) but also emphasizes the need for bringing about a transformation of outer social order and establish equality through moral power achieved through spiritual discipline and even the use of force to curb the evil, injustice and oppression which creates imbalances in the Order of God and Law of Nature. Professor Puran Singh exalts the unique spirit of Guru Gobind Singh's humanism as :

We can trace the most modern tendencies of human aspirations in the Khalsa that Guru Gobind Singh created in the Punjab. Some of us trace in the Khalsa the beginnings of a socialistic society..... Modern humanity must come to accept the conclusions of the Guru on the problem of an ideal, yet workable social reconstruction.²

We can also see in the creation of the Khalsa a well-designed programme of a revolution more popular and plebian than that of the French Revolution and other revolutions of secular type that have occurred in the history of human civilization. The birth of the

Khalsa was the only alternative to the existing Indian society; an alternative of casteless, egalitarian Republic.³

The perception of humanism of Guru Gobind Singh is reflected right from his childhood. He was barely nine years old when a sudden turn came in his life as well as in the affairs of the Sikh community and the society in Punjab. Early in 1675, under the leadership of Kirpa Ram, a group of Kashmiri Pandits driven to desperation by the religious fanaticism of the Mughal satrap, Iftikhar Khan visited Anandpur to seek Guru Tegh Bahadur's intercession. As the Guru sat reflecting on what to do, young Gobind Rai, arriving there in company with his playmates, asked him why he looked so pre-occupied. The father replied, "Grave are the burdens the earth bears. She will be redeemed only if a truly worthy person comes forward to lay down his head. Distress will then be expunged and happiness ushered in." "None could be worthier than yourself to make such a sacrifice", remarked young Gobind in his innocent manner but intensely absorbed with human concern for the suffering humanity. Guru Tegh Bahadur appreciated the spirit of his son and soon afterwards proceeded to the imperial capital, Delhi, and courted death on 11 November 1675 and attained martyrdom for the protection of religious freedom of the Hindus. This was the second Martyrdom offered by Sikh Gurus (first was that of Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs in 1606) for the violation of human rights by the tyrant State of the Mughals.

Guru Gobind Singh rejected the mere contemplative and actionless life of idle mystic pursuits or the life of renunciation instead he preached active service in the midst of worldly relations. He says : There can be no worship without good actions. Such actions, however, are not to be formal deeds of so-called merit, but should be inspired by an intense desire to please God by serving his creatures through altruistic deeds. If we love God our whole perspective on life changes. God brings cosmic reassurance as well as fear (of God). Guru Gobind Singh's social vision of humanity is based on the dictum that; 'to love humanity is the way to reach God.'⁴

Guru Gobind Singh's concern for man, therefore, is based on the well being of the total man. He realized more than any other of his contemporary Indian thinker, that the enormity of the problem of human existence, which is always beset with inevitable limits of time and space, and also conflicts, friction of the social classes, oppression and suppression of the ruling power; inevitably involves the innocent, the poor and man of conscious.

Guru Gobind Singh was a genius, a well read person and a man of letters. In his compositions, we find Guru's projection of man as a 'being-in-the-spirit' as well as 'being-in-the-world'. Man is a not only inseparable from humanity but also depends on it for achieving his transcendence from the limits of time and space by establishing divine compensation on this earth; while performing social duties for the protection of *Dharma*. That is why Guru Gobind Singh pledged his Khalsa to 'die for living' and professed that spiritually, goodness and virtues are useless, if they seek personal salvation only. Guru Gobind Singh made his followers to pick up the sword and fight against tyranny without any fear of death. The Guru looked upon the Sword (*Bhagauti*) as the visible manifestation of Supreme Power to destroy evil. The victory sought was a moral one and its attainment was to be certain, beyond any doubt. This was to be the prayer of every spiritual soldier :

Grant me O Lord, this one boon
That I must never shrink from noble deeds,
Should have no fear when fighting the foe.
And victory be assuredly mine.⁵

Guru Gobind Singh's composition, the *Akal Ustat* is especially marked in the social content. Like *Asa Di Var* of Guru Nanak, it condemns, in no uncertain terms, religious deviousness, casteism, ritualistic practices and emphasises the unity of God and the brotherhood of man. It inculcates truthful living, co-existence and inter-faith understanding. While adulating the attributes and mercy of the Eternal, the *Akal Ustat* decries practices that undermine the peace and tranquillity of the social fabric and the activities that create a distance between man and man. May be our ways of life are different, our languages are different, our genes, races,

complexions and features are different; may be it is to different geographical locales, regions and countries that we belong and the way we dress up, Yet inspite of all this diversity, the entire universe is created by God and everyone is equal in His eyes⁶ :

Some are ascetics, renunciates or yogis,
Some are celibates; given to abnegation are others.
Some are Hindus and some are Muslims—Shias or Sunnis.
Mankind, in fact, is a family together (is the same).⁷

Guru Gobind Singh recognised the essential attitude of universal humanism in *Akal Ustat* as :

Let all human beings understand,
that they belong to the one and the same caste.
I recognise none but the one God.
There is no duality.
Except in the protection of the One sole God,
nowhere is salvation.
The temple and the mosque are the same;
The Hindu and the Muslim forms of worship are the same.
All men are the same, although they appear
different under different local influences.
The bright and the dark, the ugly and the beautiful.
The Hindus and the Muslims have developed themselves,
According to the conditions of different countries.
All are made of the same build—compound of the same
five elements. The *Puranas* and *Quran* are the same,
and they proclaim in essence the same message.⁸

Besides his own writings, through the literature produced under his patronage in his court (*Darbar*) at Paonta Sahib he sought to create the ethos of humanity and universal moral and ethical values in the popular medium so that it could be easily communicated to the masses. For this purpose, Guru Gobind Singh also got rendered important patriotic Puranic legends and epics in Khari Boli and Punjabi. The selection of local dialects as medium of literature by the Guru also shows how much importance he gave to everyday spoken language of the people. It must have played a vital role in

the revival of the spirit, courage and self-confidence of the people of his time, as it is even today believed that whosoever recites *Chandi di Vaar* would find the courage to face conflict or friction. Actually this work was designed by the Guru to prepare the Hindu masses of India to stand up against the inhuman and unjust rule of the Mughals. The Guru believed that religion should be an effective vehicle to promote the values of love, harmony and peace. Spiritual insight into the nature of things should lead to an enlightened understanding of the phenomenal world. Guru's preaching of oneness of God and brotherhood of mankind vitalised his people and filled them with faith, enthusiasm and self-confidence. The Guru's aim was to build up integrated personalities in the passive individuals of his times, who were indifferent to social needs. The Guru believed that outward discipline was essential to maintain inner strength and faith of the people. Guru Gobind Singh chalked out a grand programme of transforming the weak, timid and ignorant people into a breed of warriors. It spelt out the empirical role of the holy man in a societal religion. This marked the climax of the God-oriented mission of Guru Nanak for the welfare of the whole universe. It was in this background that a profound, dynamic and revolutionary social ideology of Guru Gobind Singh was articulated in the creation of the *Khalsa*.

The Order of the Khalsa, since its origin, has stood up against injustice and defied all wrongful authority. Such was the heroic spirituality with which the Guru inspired his Sikhs. A Khalsa was not an ordinary soldier. He was a saint-soldier, saint first and soldier next. As a saint he was expected to practice the presence of God with every breath that he took, and as soldier he was ever ready to wage a war against evil. Even in war, the Lord's Name was to be his mainstay and his inspiration. By virtue of the double blessing of *bani* (*nam*) and *bana* (attired with soldiers uniform and arms), the Khalsa would ever remain in *chardi kala* or ascendant spirit. Even under the most trying circumstances, and shadow of genocide the Khalsa would not lose his heart and his poise but keep intact his faith, determination and moral code of conduct (*Rehat Maryada*) and never to hurt women, children and innocents.

Certainly Guru Gobind Singh contributed an adventurous

development in the history of humanism with the creation of the Khalsa. The Guru and his the Khalsa presented an excellent example of chivalry, high character, commitment to the noble cause of service to humanity, martyrdom, nobility, patriotism and generosity. Guru Gobind Singh infused a spirit of vigour and vitality among his followers with a new discipline, identity and code of conduct. The Khalsa observed discipline like that of the army with a difference that it was not the force of an individual ruler, fighting for acquiring land or booty or to establish its sovereignty, but it was the Army of the God (*Khalsa Akal Purak Ki Fauj*), it stood for the protection of *Dharma* (righteousness) and the downtrodden. The Khalsa was created with the direct support of the Lord. Therefore, the sovereignty of the Khalsa is the gift of God.⁹ The Khalsa brotherhood is bound to the service of God and the service of humanity. The Guru emphasized the moral and physical training of the Khalsa in order to create a perfect saint soldier who leads a truthful life and serves the nation. For centuries the Khalsa army fought back attacks by Mughals and Afghans and stood for the defence and unity of the nation.

The basic idea behind the institution of the Khalsa, as conceived by Guru Gobind Singh, was to wipe out all invidious distinctions between man and man and arouse the consciousness of human dignity even among those people who had all along been regarded as fit only to occupy the fringes of society (the *dalits*), Guru Gobind Singh's contribution was to give these ideas an institutional status. It should be of interest to social workers of our time to understand how the Guru proceeded to create a new socio-spiritual order out of the existing chaos and complexities. We may justifiably assert that the implication of the Guru's innovations went much beyond the frontiers of his community and had universal applicability. In fact, this was and continues to be totally relevant today in improving the pan-Indian socio-political scene.

Guru Gobind Singh had administered *amrit* to the five Beloved Ones (*Panj Piaras*) and then himself took baptism from them. This was a unique example of a pragmatic policy of establishing social leveling at the grass root level. His contemporary poet, Bhai Gurdas 2nd exhorts Guru's act as :

Hail Guru Gobind Singh,
Who is himself Master as well as disciple.¹⁰

The socio-political content of the *amrit* ceremony is also a clearly plebeian experiment. Three of the five Beloved Ones were *dalits*. Even the Jats (Dharam Das was a Jat) in those days were considered only a cut above the *dalits*. In the words of a contemporary foreign writer of Guru Hargobind's time Mohsin Fani, the celebrated writer of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*; "They were the lowest stratum of the *vaishayas*". Thus, four out of the five Beloved ones belonged to marginalised communities in medieval society. Guru Gobind Singh's religion could not but work for upward mobility of these suppressed people. By asking the Sikhs to sip *amrit* from the same bowl, Guru Gobind was, in a way, inflicting the evil practice of untouchability a fatal blow. Guru Gobind Singh invested the *Amritdhari* Sikhs with a higher status than that of ordinary Sikhs. The Guru made the declaration :

Verily, the Khalsa represents my faithful image.
I am, where the Khalsa is.¹¹

In the *Dasam Granth*, his magnum opus, the Guru proclaimed:

Whatever I am, it is due to these people,
otherwise there exist millions upon millions
of poor people like me.¹²

Thereby, Guru Gobind Singh not only inspired his Khalsa with super-human powers but also glorified them as his friends and source of strength. "For him the people, inspired by true spirituality and wisdom, were the prospects of future and he was the first to point out in world history that the fate of future civilization was not in the hands of the mighty individuals but in the hands of morally and spiritually awakened nations."¹³ In Sikhism, spiritual values have to be incorporated into individual behaviour and social practice through whatever hardship the environment offers and human existence permits. Never before had social consciousness been awakened so deeply and so profoundly as was done by Guru Gobind Singh.¹⁴ The Guru emphatically proclaimed:

The spirit of the people is the spirit of God;

When anyone causes suffering to the people;
God's wrath falls on him.¹⁵

Guru Gobind Singh calls God 'the Wielder of the Sword and the Protector with the Sword.'¹⁶

Guru Gobind Singh "gave to the Sikh community a unique slogan; *Degh-Tegh-Fateh*; meaning thereby-Victory to the sword of freedom and victory to the food front (provision of food for all)", so that nobody remains enslaved and deprived of food. This was the economic and political plan of the social vision of the great genius-thought of the Great Guru. Actually the attainment of this ideal is what can really bring salvation to our poor nation "which is threatened continuously by poverty, food shortage, aggressors on borders and conflicts within."¹⁷

Bread and liberty, symbolised by two terms *Degh* (cauldron) and *Tegh* (Sword) are the key concepts of Guru Gobind Singh's socio-political ideology which upholds economic equality and political and cultural liberty (human rights) for all.¹⁸

The word *Degh* is commonly used for preparing food for a congregation, *Langar* (community kitchen, free food for all). *Langar* is attached with every Sikh temple where everybody partakes food at an equal level while sitting in a row (*pangat*). "*Tegh* is a Persian term; meaning sword which symbolizes divine power and stands for supremacy and sovereignty of Justice, Truth and Virtues, which inspires people to fight against tyranny and oppression and protects the innocent people and the holymen of all faiths. In his writings, Guru Gobind Singh had used the term *Tegh* and its Sanskrit equivalents like, *as*, *khag*, *khadag*, *Bhagauti*, *Sri Sahib* etc. which also stands as attributive names of God.¹⁹

Guru Gobind Singh also uses the terms *Sarab Loh* (All steel) and *Maha Kala* or *Sarab Kala* (Mighty Timeless Death) or *Akal* (The Timeless) for God as the saviour of humble, weak and noble people.²⁰

"The two basic needs of human beings are food to sustain his body and a clean conscience free from all fear of oppression and intimidation."²¹

Moreover, "Liberty is an inalienable right of all human beings. The purpose of all enlightened religious and political institutions is to realize the maximum of human liberty and equality."²²

Sikhism aims at the moral, spiritual, economic and cultural ends of life which are basically the same for all human beings throughout the world. Consciousness of human dignity and self-respect among the Khalsa emerges not merely from individual conscience but from moral and social responsibility over every sikh towards other human beings. This moral and social responsibility is not merely towards friends, family, neighbours, but also to all human beings who need and deserve help.²³

Throughout its history the Sikh leadership had been using the slogan of *Degh-Tegh-Fateh* (victory into *Degh* and *Tegh*). But the tenth Master—Guru Gobind Singh believed in the indestructible spiritual unity and perennial wisdom of the above component. Guru Gobind Singh has explained this phenomenon in his devotional composition when he was hardly eighteen years old. It reads :

Lord, because You grasp my hand
Within Your Gracious Hand,
And I am considered Your own.
Protect my honour and shame,
considering me Your own;
Be my Sustainer and Saviour,
Destroy all my enemies one by one.
In this world there will prevail;
Degh: the symbol of Bread for all;
Tegh: the symbol of Freedom from fear;
Protect me with Your own Hand Lord:
No one would dare to oppress and crush me.²⁴

"Guru Gobind Singh always addresses the human world (*Jagat*) in his compositions with a positive attitude. He tries to impress everyone that religion which broods on abstractions, metaphysical speculations or a religion which takes shelter in bigotry and fanaticism turns away from God. Only intense God-consciousness in which we feel the Presence and Invisible Hand of God can inspire and illumine

the truly religious persons to fight evil and political crimes against humanity."25

It is through this social philosophy that the Sikh community became a stronghold of fortitude, determination and daring dynamism. Guru Gobind Singh consolidated the Sikh society on the strong foundation of democratic, socialistic and humanitarian principles sixty years before J.J. Roousseau and about one hundred thirty five years before Karl Marx was born. The Guru had received these directives as part of his heritage from the founder prophet of Sikhism—Guru Nanak and the events of martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev fifth Guru of the Sikhs who had frankly stated in his *bani* that Sikhism was a distinct way of life embracing the seekers of truth of all creeds and sacrifice of the Guru for the ideals he preached. The defensive policy adopted by his grandfather Guru Hargobind (the sixth guru) and the peaceful struggle and martyrdom of his father Guru Tegh Bahadur (the ninth Guru) had strengthened the vision and genius of the young Guru Gobind Singh to pronounce his life mission as to destroy evil and protect righteousness.

The Guru aimed at setting up a democratic, humanitarian, spiritually enlightened cultural order which inspired the individual to develop himself completely and participate in the collective destiny of his community and other fellow beings on the path of moral and spiritual life.²⁶

The democratic spirit and humanitarian attitude inculcated amongst the Sikhs through the creation of the Khalsa by the Guru provided them with the self-confidence to protect themselves against abuse of power in religious, social or political spheres.²⁷ There had been serious tensions and conflicts on the religious and political plane at various stages of history when even the survival of the Sikh identity was wildly chased and challenged by the oppressive states of the times but it was only on account of the strength and vitality of the Khalsa that the Sikh community has survived these challenges to its very existence and instead also showed as much concern about the problems of the oppressed of the other clans. This is why, perhaps, Sikhs surpass other cultural

nationalities and communities in the adoptability of identifying themselves with every other community around them. The social philosophy and humanitarian ideology of Guru Gobind Singh has proved to be the backbone of the Sikh society.

Guru Gobind Singh instituted several missionary orders which continued to work to achieve the goal of life set by him. The achievements of these orders and organisations signify the great farsightedness of their founder. Nirmalas formed the foremost missionary order created by Guru Gobind Singh.

Before Guru Gobind Singh, knowledge and learning had been the privilege of upper classes especially Brahmins who considered the low caste unworthy of the sacred knowledge contained in the holy books, consequently, only Brahmins could learn Sanskrit. The Guru wanted to break these man made barriers and to invest the common man's enlightened with knowledge. It has been stated that in 1686 A.D. one Sanskrit scholar named Pandit Raghunath met the Guru at Paonta Sahib. The Guru wanted him to open a Sanskrit school for teaching the Sikhs. The scholar was very particular about the castes of his pupils. When he (Guru) came to know that the Sikhs who wanted to learn Sanskrit were not Brahmins and belonged to lower castes and Pandit Raghunath had refused to teach them, then the Guru commissioned five Sikhs to have regular training in the Sanskrit lore and sent them to Benaras (Varanasi). On their return, these five Sikhs formed the nucleus of what subsequently came to be known as Nirmalas. When the Guru organised the Khalsa—these dedicated scholars joined the Khalsa order after taking *khande de pahul* (baptism).²⁸

The Nirmala order kept the traditions of Sanskrit learning among the Sikh and produced valuable literature pertaining to Sikh scripture, commentary and exposition of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* (Adi Granth), Sikh philosophy and theology. This missionary order served the cause of spreading Sikhism in every nook and corner of India.

The members of this order continued their work silently even during the darkest period of Sikh history. They kept the flag of learning high as instructed by the Guru even though they were

being persecuted and facing great difficulties. Among them were very eminent scholars who wrote a number of books. Gulab Singh (of Lahore District), Sant Nikka Singh and Pandit Tara Singh Narotam (of Patiala) were prominent Nirmala Scholars.²⁹

Their contributions represent facets of the wisdom, vision and humanism of Guru Gobind Singh. Another unique example of Guru Gobind Singh's teachings was his universal love for all humanity. The Guru stated :

All human beings should be recognised as belonging to one caste.³⁰

The Sikh religion was created by the Gurus for the purpose of serving mankind as a moral duty. Guru Gobind Singh baptised the Sikhs and created the Khalsa so that the Sikhs would not hesitate even to sacrifice their lives for the betterment of lives of their fellow brothers and the whole humanity. Guru Gobind Singh himself set the example of supreme sacrifice for the sake of protection of righteousness and fighting against tyranny, oppression, exploitation; and safeguarding freedom, liberty and justice. In fact, Khalsa was to act as an army of the God (*Akal Purak Ki Fauj*), as a protector of humanity. Mankind cannot find a more humanitarian religion than Sikhism. Much before the Red Cross Movement was started in 1864 by Jean Henry Durrant in Switzerland, a similar type of humanitarian service of much higher level was initiated by Guru Gobind Singh.³¹

This aspect of humanitarian service and universal love as taught by the Guru was represented by the order of the *Sewa Panthis*. The founder of *Sewa Panthis* was Bhai Kanhaiya a devout Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh. He belonged to Sodra District Gujranwala. He joined the service of the Guru's family during the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur and he used to carry water for the Guru's kitchen. During the battle of Anandpur Sahib fought by Guru Gobind Singh against the joint forces of the hill rajas and the Mughal forces, Bhai Kanhaiya used to serve water to the wounded soldiers in the battlefield without any discrimination. One day some Sikhs complained to the Guru against Bhai Kanhaiya's act that he was supplying water to wounded soldiers of the enemy. When

called upon to explain his conduct by the Guru he explained that he could not discriminate against the enemy as all were the creation of the same God as taught by the Guru. The Guru was pleased with his reply and praised his services and blessed him to treat all wounded soldiers equally disregarding their side. The Guru gave him ointment and first-aid material to dress the wounded soldiers as well.³² Thus Bhai Kanhaiya carried the duties of modern Red Cross under the patronage of his Master. That was the kind of unique humanism that was preached and practised by Guru Gobind Singh. Bhai Kanhaiya founded the order of *Sewa Panthis*, a missionary order for the service of humanity. After Bhai Kanhaiya his mission was carried on by his successors. Among them most prominent were Addan Shah and Sewa Ram.³³ The *Sewa Panthis* have established their centres at various places in India and they have rendered valuable services to the Indian Society. This missionary order is known for social service especially for medical services, dispensaries, hospitals, *dharamsalas*, *langars* etc. But now some centres have taken up the cause of promotion of education and learning. Various schools, technical colleges and are being run by them. They are also engaged in printing literature, magazines and books for free distribution. The *Sewa Panthi Dera* at Gonyana Mandi, Distt. Bhatinda is the most eminent among them.

The above mentioned missionary task is the central thought and core idea of Guru Gobind Singh's social philosophy. Here, man is called to a higher sphere and it is his duty to bring about the fulfilment of these ideas into reality. It is a tremendous job and needs total dedication, sacrifice and courage to face the challenge without any fear. One has to achieve this aim by eliminating ignorance, oppression and fighting the forces of evil in all spheres of life (religious, social and political).³⁴ To understand the social vision of Guru Gobind Singh we have to be acquainted with his conception of man and his role in society. This hypothesis is clearly reflected in his writings. According to Guru Gobind Singh :

Man is not an accidental creation of nature, nor a mere bundle of sensory desires but a living spirit with a destiny and mission sent on earth by God.³⁵

The Guru believed that :

Man is the point of interaction between the sensible and spiritual world, where the two great rhythms of cosmic tension meet and are exchanged. Enjoying a unique key position, man is the universe's value and consciousness. Humanity is the immanent spirit of God creating playfully an ever new world of values around it.³⁶

The purpose of his life is to achieve perfection of mind, body and soul and to motivate others to follow this path and make useful contribution in creating harmony in society. "Man, of Guru Gobind Singh, does not mean a Hindu or a Muslim, a Punjabi or an Indian, a whiteman or a dark complexioned man. When the Guru refers to man, he mentions the members of the world community like French, the Chinese, the Manchurians, the Armenians, Pathans and Arabs, the Gorkhas, Indians from Bengal, Bundelkhand, Magadh, Talingana etc.; the Greeks, Romans and Englishmen.³⁷

The information recorded about the nationalities, racial and ethnic groups of the world shows the knowledge and awareness of the great Guru about the global communities. In fact Guru Gobind Singh addresses the human society in his *bani* and not the individual communities. Even when he is referring to a particular group, the message behind his preaching is for the whole of mankind.³⁸ The vocabulary, culture, languages, traditions and civilization³⁹ are deemed synonymous in the writings of the Guru. In his opinion, there exist national, racial, social, linguist, cultural, religious and ethnic differences between these communities but these differences are superfluous and man made. These differences have not been created by the inner spirit of man and God but by the outside environmental factors and man made beliefs, manners, customs and cultural traits. Guru Gobind Singh condemns all such differentiations, rituals, dogmas, superstitious, hypocrisy, exclusiveness, social segregation which divides humanity. All caste, class and *varan* based bifurcation of the religious boundaries of the social structure of the Hindu society and monopoly of the priestly class are categorically rejected by Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru introduced revolutionary steps to establish a casteless

egalitarian society in India and made supreme sacrifices for the safeguard and preservation of the glorious Indian cultural heritage and protection of freedom of religion of the Hindu society. The story of the Kashmiri Brahmins who had sought protection from his father Guru Tegh Bahadur against the onslaught of forcible conversion to Islam by the fanatic Emperor Aurangzeb and the prompt suggestion by the child Guru (Gobind Rai) to his father to make the supreme sacrifice speaks a lot about the humanitarian genius of the personality of Guru Gobind Singh.

The Guru was free from all sorts of bias and prejudice as regards his social philosophy and humanism is concerned. He did not spare his own followers from such faults. Whenever he found these weaknesses among his followers he punished them very severely.⁴⁰ When the missionary system of the *masands* established by Guru Amardas became corrupt, Guru Gobind Singh ordered the arrest of all the culprit *masands* and they were severely punished.⁴¹ Thieves, robbers, exploiters, cheats and murderers were given retributive punishments.

Guru Gobind Singh taught the Khalsa the highest moral and ethical values. The Khalsa had to lead the householder's life and not to indulge in adultery. The Khalsa had to respect the honour of women.

During the guruship of Guru Gobind Singh woman enjoyed freedom and a high status in the Sikh society which was denied to them (woman) in Hindu and Muslim societies. In Sikhism, woman are considered as equal human being (not to be considered inferior to man) as taught by Guru Nanak.⁴² This concept of equality is based on the spiritual consciousness and the equal social platform for all humans. According to Guru Gobind a woman, the better half of man is the gateway to salvation.⁴³ However he made it clear that only virtuous woman are to be respected. Evil minded woman can be a curse to life and society. The Guru warned his Sikhs against having any contact with morally loose woman and to be always aware of their wicked designs, for self defensive purpose.⁴⁴

Sikh woman had played a significant part in the history of the Sikhs during Guru Gobind Singh's time. When Guru Gobind Singh

was quite young, the administration of the Guru's *darbar* and the affairs of the Sikh community were conducted by his mother, Mata Gujari as is clear from some of her letters - *Hukamnamas* available to us.⁴⁵ Even during the introduction of the initiation ceremony of the Khalsa due respective place was given to Mata Sundari who put *patasas* (a kind of sweetmeat) in the holy water (*Amrit*) prepared for baptism. After the demise of Guru Gobind Singh and the death of Banda Singh Bahadur, for nearly two decades the Sikh community was guided by the orders of Guru Gobind Singh's wives—Mata Sundari and Mata Sahib Kaur (also known as the Holy Mother of the Khalsa). Their *Hukamnamas* are historical documents indicating their status, position, command and guidance for maintaining direct contacts with the Sikh *Sangats* (congregations) of far off areas like Pak Pattan, Patna, Benaras, Gazipur and Dacca.⁴⁶ The moral character of the Khalsa and the respect they showed to their women was all due to the Guru's teachings of maintaining a high moral character and humanism to his followers.⁴⁷ This glorious aspect has been fully reflected in the history of the Khalsa. It is recorded in the Muslim chronicles and historical documents that, in the contemporary Muslim world every Muslim conquest was always accompanied by number of slaves and woman captives as articles of war booty. Woman captured were taken by the alien soldiers and invaders and they were often sold in open market as slave girls (*Kaneez*). The beautiful woman were offered to the rulers, officers as gifts for their *harem* (the female apartment of a palace).⁴⁸ But Guru Gobind Singh denounced this practice. It is said that once during the war, the Sikh soldiers captured one beautiful Muslim woman. They wanted to treat the woman in the same way as the Muslim soldiers had been treating the Hindu woman folk for eight hundred years (since Mir Qasim's invasions). But Guru Gobind Singh did not allow the Sikhs to show any disrespect to the Muslim woman and consequently she was restored to her family as ordained by the Guru.⁴⁹

How the Guru argued with the Sikh soldiers to keep aloof from adultery has been recorded by Bhai Santokh Singh in his *Suraj Prakash Granth* as :

The Sikhs argued with the Guru that the Muslims carried the

Hindu woman. The Sikhs wanted to pay the Muslims in their own coins. Then why such a thing should be forbidden." The Guru then replied, "I want to take the Panth to the highest level and will not allow it to fall to the depth of hell. Such an immoral conduct has, therefore, been forbidden."⁵⁰

It is the impact of Guru Gobind Singh's humanitarian teachings that the respect of women including those of the Muslim ones, captured during the war, became a special feature of the moral character of the Khalsa. In the Sikh *Rehatnamas* and *Sikh Maryada* code of conduct; marrying a Muslim woman (*Turkani*) was considered a sin (*Kuraihat*). It was the practice of this code of conduct which was the motivation for the disciplined behaviour and high moral character of the Khalsa.

Besides introducing social reforms and creating an ideal society, the social vision of Guru Gobind Singh primarily "aimed at uniting all mankind in thoughtful, ethical and spiritual righteousness".⁵¹ If we are seriously concerned with solving the basic problem of equality, social justice, political freedom and material requirements of the suffering humanity, we have to view the whole phenomenon with a cosmic vision and global consideration. Only elevated personality with moral commitment could have thought on these lines. Guru Gobind Singh believed that spirituality must transform man from within, before politics transforms him from without.⁵² The cultural bonds between different communities can only be strengthened if we realise that all humanity is created by one Supreme Reality. The humanism of Guru Gobind Singh implies us to study :

All religions in their true spirit show reverence for them all. The search for Truth which is one, the love of God which is one, and service of humanity which is one should bring mankind closer to one another and weld them into one world family. Guru Gobind Singh's life, his mission and his social philosophy repeatedly remind us that man is of one human race and the search for the light and love of God is a universal quest in which all paths have to march towards one and the same goal as comrades and not as enemies or rivals.⁵³

According to Guru Gobind Singh :

True spiritual life consists in serving others and giving to them what we have. The Guru condemns the worldly attitude of the religious sects of those days. They tried to snatch the worldly belongings of the novices, and did not impart any truth to them.⁵⁴

o o o

It is a sad truth that men professing to be the teachers of religion distinguish between the rich and the poor of their flock. The rich and the poor are alike in the sight of the Lord and hence must have the same position in the eyes of His prophets.⁵⁵

o o o

In a posture of meditation men generally shut their eyes. But if it is merely a show, it is often compared to the attitude of a heron intent upon catching a fish. As soon as the tiny creature is within reach, the bird soon relinquishes his thoughtful posture and with one clinch swallows it off. Similarly the hypocrites wait for a wealthy disciple and as soon as they have got one they prey upon him.⁵⁶

o o o

In the Sikh religion bowing to the feet of a good man to express humility is strictly enjoined; but the Guru points out that a huntsman also lowers his head, not with a view to show his humility, but to make his aim more sure. Outward confessions without sincerity of heart count for nothing. The fixed gaze of a cat before pouncing upon his prey.⁵⁷

o o o

The ideas expressed in *Swayya* 32 of Guru Gobind Singh are addressed to the leader of a sect, and bear the soundest advice :

Men, covet to have a number of followers, hence begin to minister to their whims.⁵⁸ The Guru says in the words of Christ "What availeth a man if he gaineth the whole world but loseth his own soul." It is the practice of truth and not the

number of disciples that will stand in any stead before the Lord God.⁵⁹

The keynote of the *Swayya* 33 of Guru Gobind Singh dwells in the most touching terms on the dying moments of a person, when everybody whom he loved in this world, leaves him alone to appear before God and get the reward or punishment of his actions done in this world according to the law of retribution. The Guru reminds us:

In the superstitious dread of the dead body even the wife hesitates to touch her beloved husband, whom she so fondly embraced at one time.⁶⁰ In this hot country a corpse could not be safely kept for a long time. So everyone who comes to attend the funeral always exhorts to make haste in cremation, lest the body may become putrid. Very few moments are given to him (the dead body) to lie in the house which he considered his own, all the possessions pass to others.⁶¹

Hence says the Guru :

Keep that moment of death in view when all will desert you and you shall go all alone to bear the punishment of the evil deeds, committed for the service of persons, who are unable to help.⁶²

The gist of the teachings of Guru Gobind Singh incorporated in the last *Swayyas* of the 'Thirty Three *Swayyas*' composed by him is that; the man "is morally responsible for his deeds and will have to bear their consequences himself alone. His dear friends and near relations for whose sake he commits inequities, will not accompany him when the soul departs from the body."⁶³ The social philosophy ingredient in this *Swayya* gives the message of promoting the personality of an individual as a responsible individual citizen of the society morally bounded to his duties and spiritually conscious of his destination.

It is explicitly explained in the writings of Guru Gobind Singh that the Guru propagated equality of mankind and universality of the existence of the Supreme Reality and encouraged interfaith dialogue for better understanding and peaceful co-existence among

the communities of the world as well as to have an indepth vision of the unfathomable creator of this universe. The Guru writes :

Eastern fail to fathom Thee,
of the Himalayas side sing, Thy eulogies,
People of Gaur Gardej also recite Thy name;
Jogies perform austerities; yogic practices
Arabic people also recite Thy Name,
French acknowledge Thee,
Quraishis of the Qandhar are aware of Thy existence;
Westerns regard God, as their moral duty;
Marathas and Mughals worship Thee with deep adoration,
Dravidians and Telugu consider Thee as
centre pilgrimage and support of *Dharma*;
Bengalis of Bengal, English of England,
Dilwali of Delhi (Delhites) also function as per Thy Will;
Rohillas of Rohilkhand, brave Maghals of Magadh,
Bundelas of Bundelkhand wash off their sins,
by remembering Thy name with devotion.
Gorkhas of Nepal eulogies Thee; Chinese
bow before Thee with respect;
Tibetans erase all their evils by meditating on Thy Name;
One who remembers Thee (with true heart)
attains perfection, honour and salvation;
and his house (abode) is filled with prosperity and
affluence.⁶⁴

Again the Guru reminds :

Inhabitants of Hingula and Himalayas,
the dark Africans and fair Iranians meditate on Thy Name.⁶⁵

Besides, he also mentions :

Natives of France and England,
Bilinguals of France;
Mirdangani of Makran—all sing thy eulogies,
inhabitants of Bhakkar and Qandhar,
Gakhar's of Gor (Gaur), Natives of Gardeja
Those who live on air alone—remember His Name;

Plau, Kamrup and Kamaun—all in the East,
Thou pervades all places wherever we go;
Master with perfect grandeur, unaffected by magic (*Mantar*
and *Tantar*)
None can fathom Thy grandeur and glory, O Lord
Supreme.⁶⁶

It is a historical fact that; 'In the case of nations which are historically and structurally constituted of diverse denominations, multi-lingual geographical areas, widely uneven economic and cultural social states and opposing political ideologies, the process of integration and social harmony becomes an urgency even for the sheer survival of a nation.'⁶⁷ About five centuries ago the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak Dev, presented a composite philosophy of social harmony in Indian Society. Guru Gobind Singh played a unique role in integrating the pluralistic society of India. However, there is a misunderstanding among some writers about Guru Gobind Singh's attitude towards Islam and they have wrongly and ignorantly interpreted that the Guru was a sworn enemy of the Muslims. In the absence of any authentic evidence to corroborate this opinion we straight forwardly reject this biased view. In fact, the events, activities and facts of the life history of Guru Gobind Singh clearly show that he was not against Islam but against the tyranny of the contemporary Mughal rulers. The Guru fought against the Mughal forces not being Muslims or to take revenge of the ruthless murders of his near and dear ones, who attained martyrdom while resisting oppression of the Mughal government.

The Guru's mission was to fight against the exploitation of the fanatic state. It was because of this attitude of the Guru that the response of the local Muslims in support of Guru's struggle was overwhelming. There were many devout Muslim disciples of the Guru like Saiyad Bhikham Shah and many Muslim soldiers and Pathans had joined his army. The Guru also had many trusted Muslim friends. It was Pir Badru-ud-Din popularly known as Pir Budhu Shah of Sahdaura (Distt. Ambala) who presented seven hundred followers to the Guru at the battle of Bhangani (1686 A.D.). The Pir was later on put to death by the *Faujdar* of Sirhind Wazir Khan for assisting the Guru. The Guru had honoured his

Muslim friends for their sincerity and support.⁶⁸ There are many Muslim families who still possess gifts from the Guru to their ancestors with reverence. These items are preserved as relics in India and Pakistan. After the battle of Chamkaur when the Guru was encircled by a large army and the Hindus of the area had disassociated from him (out of fear of retaliation from the Mughal forces). Some Muslim families risked their all to protect him and helped him in his safe escape through the jungles of Machiwara. The two Muslim Pathan devotees of the Guru—Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan with whom he had friendly dealings in the past, saved him from falling into the hands of the enemy. They adored him as the divine—Pir of Uch, and carried him in a planquin to Sirsa. Among other Muslim nobles who had friendly relations with Guru Gobind Singh was the *Nawab* Rai Kala of Rajkot, who disregarding the fear of the Mughal army, welcomed the Guru with respect and served him. He also sent one of his servant Noora Mahi to Sirhind to find out the news about his two younger sons and the mother of Guru Gobind Singh.⁶⁹ Again, Guru Gobind Singh had composed his famous letter—*Zafarnama*, sitting in the house of his Muslim Persian teacher Pir Muhammad at Dina Kangar (Distt. Faridkot). The Guru gave equal respect and patronage to Muslim scholars in his court. Among the fifty two poets engaged in literary pursuit at his *Darbar*, there was Alam Shah who, enjoyed equal blessings and bounties. Besides, Guru Gobind Singh's friendly relation with Bahadur Shah is a self evidence of the secular attitude and humanism of the great Guru. Thus, there is not an iota of truth in the assertion that Guru Gobind Singh has created the Khalsa only to fight the Muslims.

In his letter, *Zafarnamah* to the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb written in Persian, Guru Gobind Singh admonished Aurangzeb for his treachery, tyranny, breach of faith and chastised him for not keeping his words even after swearing on the *Quran*, the holy book of his faith. The Guru assails the Emperor with a strong charge laid against his unrighteous conduct for the acquisition of power and pelf and reminded him that the warfare would have been avoided if the Emperor had proved true to his words. While criticising the Emperor, Guru Gobind Singh all the same has full awareness of

Aurangzeb's position and status and he makes an unequivocal reference to this aspect but condemns his demerits and deceit.⁷⁰ About his own self, the Guru tells the Emperor that he was essentially a man of peace dedicated to the service of God through the service of humanity but believed that when all other means to restore righteousness failed, it was legitimate to take up the sword to destroy the tyrant and protect the weak and innocent. It laid emphasis on ethical and moral principles in statecraft and in life generally. The *Zafarnama* (Epistle of Victory) is an affirmative testament of ethics of war and grand moral victory of the Guru for the defence and protection of justice, peace, and freedom of conscience.

The moral that the *Zafarnama* has for us is that in order to be just and virtuous and human we must be righteous and truthful and never be misled by the temptations of power and pelf. This is a timely warning to those who seek unfair and violent means to secure influential positions in the handling of political power and public trusts to their personal aggrandisement. We have to remember that Guru Gobind Singh wrote these remarks to the man (Emperor Aurangzeb) who was responsible for killing his father, mother, all his four sons and who had destroyed his city-state (Sri Anandpur Sahib) and had annihilated his Khalsa army.⁷¹

This historical document is a significant contemporary evidence of the nature of humanism of Guru Gobind Singh. The thought and deeds of supreme sacrifices of Guru Gobind Singh clearly bring out distinction between the ethics of those religions which preach an escape from the world and society and his own which pronounced that religious and spiritual life should be pressed in the service of humanity and promotion of social good. In this manner, Guru Gobind Singh was able to lay the foundation of what may be called 'ethics of creative and rational enlightenment' which demands every enlightened person to transcend the limits of his own selfish interests and act for the general good as demanded by wisdom. The Guru exhorts his Khalsa to take up the sword of divine knowledge in hand and destroy the darkness and ignorance of mind from the very roots."⁷²

The versatile qualities of head and heart of the great Guru have been reflected in the continuous process of the various activities of the Khalsa. When *Amrit* baptism was introduced by Guru Gobind Singh the humanitarian purpose behind this innovation was to preserve the inner core idea of universal spirituality and mystic fervour of Sikh doctrines. A number of important functions were attached to the Sikh Gurudwara to make it an open socio-political centre of human equality, fraternity, unity and freedom. The participation in Sikh functions was open to all Sikhs and non-Sikh devotees. The priestly class was warded off. All services in the Sikh Gurdwaras can be performed by the Sikhs and non-Sikh devotees except the function of baptism and recitation of the *Path* of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, which can be performed by *Amritdhari* Sikhs or ordained Khalsas. Therefore, the Sikh Gurudwara is not merely a place of worship, it is a forum for seeking personal salvation and Grace (*Mehar*) of God. It stands for the total orientation of life towards a purposeful existence. Guru Gobind Singh's social vision brought a revolutionary attempt to bridge the gulf between culturally antagonistic followers of the four *Varanas* (*Jatis*). The aim of the social philosophy of the Guru had a wider perspective. It also means to obliterate the differences between all the creeds of the world. The two significant features of the humanism of Guru Gobind Singh attached to the new social order of the Khalsa created by him were, firstly to create social equality between the high and low, the rich and poor and to abolish inhuman Hindu social order of caste system (*varan ashram dharma*); and secondly to continuously inspire the Khalsa in particular and the Indian masses in general to shake off slavery, fear and timid submission to the forces of evil and fight against all despotism and tyranny.⁷³

This casteless society was open to men of all creeds and faiths. Guru Gobind Singh was well acquainted with the history of ancient India. He knew that caste system had been the root cause of social disintegration, hatred and contempt in Indian society for the last so many centuries. Brahmanical autocracy was a curse on the Indian society and Guru Gobind Singh emphatically declared that he was opposed to all types of Brahmanism which he called *bepran ki rit*.

The historical struggle between the Hindus and the Buddhists, the Vashishtha and Vishvamitra is well known. The *dharma* of the Vaishyas (merchant class) throughout has been making money and they worship only one goddess-Lakshmi. The Sudras have been eternal sufferers condemned for ever to labour, service, ignorance, poverty and slavery. Guru Gobind Singh not only abolished the hierarchical caste system as a social order but also inspired every Sikh to be as sovereign in mind and spirit as any king. The lowliest of the low took up the sword and performed deeds surpassing the legendary tales of epic heroes and medieval warriors.⁷⁴ A new fiery consciousness and the spirit of rebellions against injustice was inspired to make the humblest Indian realize his inherent human dignity and will power, self-respect and self-confidence. The revolutionary change in the thinking and actions brought about by the social vision of Guru Gobind Singh in the humblest Indian is graphically interpreted by a near contemporary British historian William Irvine as :

A low scavenger or leather dresser, the lowliest of low in the Indian estimation, had only to leave home and join the Guru's (ranks), when in a short time he would return to his birth-place as its ruler, with his order of appointment in his hand. As soon as he set foot within the boundaries, the well born and wealthy went out to greet him and escort him home. Arrived there, they stood before him with joined palms, awaiting his orders.....Not a soul dared to disobey an order, and men who had often risked themselves in battlefields, became so cowed down that they were afraid even to remonstrate. Hindus who had not joined the sect were not exempt from these oppressions.⁷⁵

Bhai Gurdas Singh (second) has narrated this unique revolutionary change brought about by Guru Gobind Singh as social and political emancipation of the masses.⁷⁶ Bhai Nand Lal also affirms that Guru Gobind Singh introduced a new social frame work, dissolved all caste differences and made all four *Varmanas* (castes) into one.^{76a}

Guru Gobind Singh had great conviction and faith in the innate

strength and democratic will of the common man in making his ideals a great social force for a complete cultural awakening.⁷⁷ The Guru records the reaction of bigoted Hindus towards Sikh social order as:

The Brahmin, on hearing this was ablaze with malice and started burning in wrath as dry grass burns in fire.⁷⁸

The far reaching consequences of Guru Gobind Singh's social philosophy are noteworthy in the social history of Punjab. Thus the social barriers between various castes and creeds were broken and social interaction and intermarriages took place not only between the Sikhs coming from various castes but even between Sikhs and Hindus and Muslims also (Maharaja Ranjit Singh had married Hindu and Muslim ladies).

Our inference from the above narration is that, the Sikh social order was thus well organised through the baptism of *khande de pahul*, "into a well knit socio-religious and politically awakened cultural community which was to remain alive for centuries to come on its remarkable social philosophy."⁷⁹

Guru Gobind Singh teaches us to fix our thought day and night on the trust of One God; who is the creator and sustainer of all the creatures, who is full of love, who is the protector, refuge, guide and helper of the poor and who gives unending joys to his devotees.

Benati Chaupai, the holy composition of Guru Gobind Singh in the form of prayer offered to God contains the gist of the humanitarian teachings of the Guru for the welfare of the whole humanity. The translation of the *Benati Chaupai* is given below :

BENATI CHAUPAI

Protect us with Thy Hand as our shield. May our aims be fulfilled. May our mind rest concentrated at Thy Feet. Sustain us, knowing us to be Thy slaves. 1. Destroy all the evil around us. Save me through Thine own intervention. May those, my allies and adherents, live in felicity. My comrades and my followers all of them, O, God. 2. Safeguard me with Thine own Hand. Destroy all my enemies now. May my hopes be completely fulfilled. May I

ever remain athirst for Thy Love. 3. May I love naught but Thee. May I receive every blessing from Thee alone. Save my helpers and my disciples. Pick out all my ill-wishers for disablement. 4. Uplift me with Thine own Hand. Destroy my fear of the hour of Death. Be ever our Support, Lord of the Banners, grant us safe conduct. 5. Protector, protect me. Thou, the Lord, the Guide-saint, the Ally and the Beloved, the Helper of the poor, the Vanquisher of the evil, Thou art our Refuge in all the fourteen Regions. 6. Brahma, the creator, demiurge, came into being within the ambit of Time. The Shiva also came to exist within the Time-cycles. The Vishnu, the Primordial Person, is also encompassed by the Time. All this phenomenon is grounded in the Time. 7. The Time which made Shiva, the Lord of the Yogis, which created Brahma, the knower of *Vedas*. The Time, which made all the temporal universes, To that our salutations. 8. The Time that created all the worlds. And created the gods, the titans and the genii. 9. The Time, which is the same One in the Beginning and in the End. Verily, that is our Light and Guide. To Him alone we salute, Who hath created all the creatures. He giveth unending joys to His own devotees. He destroyeth them that oppose Him.⁸⁰

When a quarter of Indian population was subjected to the exploitation and indignity due to oppression and pressure to rigid vertical stratification of the *varan ashram dharma*, Guru Gobind Singh was busy laying the foundation of a community in which all human members were to be treated as equals. Real equality and fraternity may, therefore, be termed Guru Gobind Singh's underlying social ideals of humanism. Having attained equality with the so-called high castes, for all practical purposes, a *dalit*, encouraged by the Khalsa learned to exist honourably with self-confidence and dignity. The Khalsa was trained in the martial arts to be physically fit, so that he could protect and defend himself and his mission against oppressors and tyrants. The *dalits* got a chance to avail this opportunity to raise their status and rank upto the highest caste. Mahatma Gandhi borrowed the word *harijan* from medieval Indian devotional poetry to denote a *dalit* but Guru Gobind Singh had already gone more further when he declared that

the *ranghretas*, the lowest among the so-called low caste, were like the 'Guru's own sons'.

In a nutshell, a complete elimination of untouchability, of theory of superior and inferior human beings, of differences based on class or birth and the creation of a united society—classless and casteless were the objectives the Guru had set before himself, and creation of the Khalsa was one of the most effective ways he devised to achieve his goal. The egalitarian principle introduced by the Guru was intended to be a complete break with the earlier Indian religious tradition which sanctified discrimination on the basis of caste. The basic aim of the Khalsa was social welfare, not the welfare of an individual or a particular caste or group. The Guru's concerns were integrated and universal. They involved a complete emancipation of man—total freedom from the fear of death, oppression and injustice. Religion thus became a potential basis of freedom of man through the humanitarian vision of the Great Guru. The Khalsa created by Guru Gobind Singh was destined to play a vital role in the Indian history.

Guru Gobind Singh's humanism, in a way, gives voice to the pure essence of man's urge for the realization of his goal of life on this earth, for the guidance of the vast Indian humanity enveloped in darkness of illusion, superstition, ignorance and false religious beliefs, practices and meaningless rituals. Whereas he rejects all that which had through the ages overgrown this essence, he gave to the people of India a total and comprehensive vision of a rational life, a cosmic outlook and a humanitarian attitude. Today, at the advent of the twenty first century, mankind is working out possible transaction towards a global social order. In this context, Guru Gobind Singh's vision of humanism can qualify as role model to find a solution to the implementation of human element in the process of globalisation. The lofty ideals of unity of God and brotherhood of mankind as preached by Guru Gobind Singh can secure the attitude of equal treatment for the entire mankind and serve as an effective guideline for establishing—love, peace, harmony and mutual understanding. Thus, laying the solid foundation for global humanism.

Notes and References:

1. ਹਮ ਇਹ ਕਾਜ ਜਗਤ ਮੋ ਆਏ ॥
ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਪਠਾਏ ॥
ਜਹਾਂ ਤਹਾਂ ਤੁਮ ਧਰਮ ਬਿਬਾਰੇ ॥
ਦੁਸਟ ਦੇਖਿਯਨਿ ਪਕਰਿ ਪਛਾਰੇ ॥
ਯਾਹੀ ਕਾਜ ਧਰਾ ਹਮ ਜਨਮੰ ॥
ਸਮਝ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਾਧੂ ਸਭ ਮਨਮੰ ॥
ਧਰਮ ਚਲਾਵਨ ਸੰਤ ਉਬਾਰਨ ॥
ਦੁਸਟ ਸਭਨ ਕੇ ਮੂਲ ਉਪਾਰਨ ॥
Bachitar Natak, Akal Purak Baach Chaupai 42, 43.
-*Dasam Granth*, Ed. Giani Mohinder Singh, Amritsar,
Vol. I, 1967, pp. 57-58.
2. Puran Singh, *Spirit of the Sikhs*, Part-II, Pub. Punjabi University,
Patiala, 1993, p. 7.
3. See *Poems of Subramania Bharati*, Tr. by Parma Nand Kumar, New
Delhi, 1997, p. 83.
4. The Guru said :
ਸਾਚੁ ਕਹੈ ਸੁਨ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਭੈ
ਜਿਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕੀਓ ਤਿਨ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪਾਇਓ ॥੯॥
Akal Ustat 9, *Dasam Granth*, p. 14.
5. ਦੇਹ ਸ਼ਿਵਾ ਬਰ ਮੋਹਿ ਇਹੈ ॥
ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮਨ ਤੇ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਨ ਟਰੈ ॥
ਨ ਡਰੈ ਅਰਿ ਸੋ ਜਬ ਜਾਇ ਲਰੈ ॥
ਨਿਸਚੈ ਕਰ ਆਪਨੀ ਜੀਤ ਕਰੈ... ॥੨੩੧॥
Bachitar Natak 231, *Ibid.*, p. 99.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
7. ਕੋਊ ਭਇਓ ਮੁੰਡੀਆ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ ਕੋਊ ਜੋਗੀ ਭਇਓ
ਕੋਊ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਚਾਰੀ ਕੋਊ ਜਤੀ ਅਨਮਾਨਬੋ ॥
ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਕੋਊ ਰਾਫਜੀ ਇਮਾਮਸਾਫੀ ॥
ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਚਾਨਬੋ ॥
Akal Ustat, *Ibid.*, p. 19.
8. ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰੀਮ ਸੋਈ ਰਾਜਕ ਰਹੀਮ ਓਈ
ਦੂਸਰੇ ਨ ਭੇਦ ਕੋਈ ਭੂਲ ਭ੍ਰਮ ਮਾਨਬੋ ॥
ਏਕ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ ਸਭਹੀ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਏਕ
ਏਕ ਹੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੈ ਜੋਤ ਜਾਨਬੋ ॥੧੫॥੬੫॥
ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਮਸੀਤ ਸੋਈ ਪੂਜਾ ਐ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਓਈ

ਮਾਨਸ ਸਭੈ ਏਕ ਪੈ ਅਨੇਕ ਕੋ ਭੁਖਾਉ ਹੈ ॥
 ਦੇਵਤਾ ਅਦੇਵ ਜੱਛ ਗੰਧ ਤੁਰਕ ਹਿੰਦੂ
 ਨਯਾਰੇ ਨਯਾਰੇ ਦੇਸਨ ਕੇ ਭੇਸ ਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਉ ਹੈ ॥
 ਏਕੈ ਨੈਨ ਏਕੈ ਕਾਨ ਏਕੈ ਦੇਹ ਏਕੈ ਬਾਨ
 ਖਾਕ ਬਾਦ ਆਤਮਾ ਐ ਆਬ ਕੋ ਰਲਾਉ ਹੈ ॥
 ਅਲਖ ਆਭੇਖ ਸੋਈ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਐ ਕਰਾਨ ਓਈ
 ਏਕ ਹੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਭੈ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਬਨਾਉ ਹੈ ॥

Ibid., p. 19.

9. ਚਕ੍ਰਵੇ ਪਦ ਦਾਤ ਪੁਰ ਪਾਯੇ ॥

Sarab Loh Granth.

10. ਵਾਹ ਵਾਹ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ
 ਆਪੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਚੇਲਾ ॥

-Varan Bhai Gurdas, Var, 41, Pauri I, p. 663.

11. ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਖਾਸ ॥
 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮਹਿ ਹਉ ਕਰਉ ਨਿਵਾਸ ॥

Sarab Loh Granth, p. 667.

12. ਇਨਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਸੇ ਸਜੇ ਹਮ ਹੈ
 ਨਹੀ ਮੋਸੋ ਗਰੀਬ ਕਰੋਰ ਪਰੇ ॥੨॥

Dasam Granth, Vol. I, 716.

13. Trilochan Singh, *Social Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh*, Pub.
 Academy of Sikh Religion and Culture, Patiala, 1988, p. 21.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

15. ਖਲਕ ਖਾਲਿਕ ਕੀ ਜਾਣ ਕੇ ਖਲਕ ਦੁਖਾਵੈ ਨਾਹਿ ॥
 ਖਲਕ ਦੁਖੈ ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲ ਜੀ ਖਾਲਿਕ ਕੋਪੈ ਤਾਹਿ ॥

Tankhahnama, Bhai Nand Lal Ji, Bhai Nand Lal Granthavali,
 Ed. Ganda Singh, Malaka, Malaiysia, 1968, p. 198.

16. ਨਮਸਕਾਰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਖੜਗ ਕੋ ਕਰੋ ਸੁ ਹਿਤੁ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਇ ॥

'Sri Mukh Patshahi 10', Bachitar Natak, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 39.
 At another place Guru Gobind Singh calls God as *Sri Khadag* (glorious
 Sword). *Sri aspan* (wielder of Sword), *Khadagketu* and so on.

17. Trilochan Singh, *Social Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 24.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

20. 'Bachitar Natak', Chapter I, Verse 23, *Dasam Granth*, Vol I.

21. Trilochan Singh, *Social Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 52.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

24. ਮਹਾਕਾਲ ਰਖਵਾਰ ਹਮਾਰੇ ॥ ਮਹਾਲੋਹ ਮੈ ਕਿੰਕਰ ਬਾਰੇ ॥
 ਅਪਨਾ ਜਾਨ ਕਰੇ ਰਖਵਾਰ ॥ ਬਾਹਿ ਗਹੇ ਕੀ ਲਾਜ ਬਿਚਾਰ ॥੪੩੫॥
 ਅਪਨਾ ਜਾਨ ਮੁਝੈ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਰੀਐ ॥ ਚੁਨ ਚੁਨ ਸ਼ੱਤ੍ਰੁ
 ਹਮਾਰੇ ਮਰੀਐ ॥ ਦੇਗ ਤੇਗ ਜਗ ਮੈ ਦੋਊ ਚਲੈ ॥
 ਰਾਖ ਆਪ ਮੁਹਿ ਅਉਰ ਨ ਦਲੈ ॥੪੩੬॥
 ਤੁਮ ਮਮ ਕਰਹੁ ਸਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਰਾ ॥ ਤੁਮ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਮੈ ਦਾਸ ਤਿਹਾਰਾ ॥
 ਜਾਨ ਅਪਨਾ ਮੁਝੈ ਨਿਵਾਜ ॥ ਆਪ ਕਰੇ ਹਮਰੇ ਸਭ ਕਾਜ ॥੪੩੭॥

Sri Krishan Avtar, stanzas 435-437,
Dasam Granth, Vol. I, p. 310.

25. Trilochan Singh, *Social philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 55.
 26. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
 27. *Ibid.*
 28. Dr. Kirpal Singh, *Badshah Darvesh Guru Gobind Singh*, Dedicated to Tercentenary Celebration of the Khalsa, April, 1999, Pub. by Punjabi University, Patiala, 1999, p. 21.
 29. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
 30. ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਰਚਾਨਬੋ ॥੮੫॥
 Akal Ustat, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 19.
 31. Sarup Singh Alag, *Non Sikh Views : Excellence of Sikhism*, Pub. Author, Alag Shabad Yug, Ludhiana, 1998, pp. 122-123.
 32. Kirpal Singh, *Badshah Darvesh Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 22.
 33. *Ibid.*
 34. See the declaration of the Divine Mission of Guru Gobind Singh in *Dasam Granth* described as following :
 ਜਹਾਂ ਤਹਾਂ ਤੁਮ ਧਰਮ ਬਿਥਾਰੋ ॥
 ਦੁਸਟ ਦੋਖਿਯਨਿ ਪਕਰਿ ਪਛਾਰੋ ॥੪੨॥

Bachitar Natak, Akal Purak Chaupai 42, Vol. I, *Ibid.*, 57.

35. Trilochan Singh, *Social Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 5.
 The fundamental doctrine of the social philosophy of Sikhism is based on the teachings of Sikh Gurus and the hymns of the *bhaktas* enshrined. in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. Guru Nanak says,
 ਰਾਹ ਦੋਵੈ ਇਕੁ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ ਸਿਝਸੀ ॥
 ਕੁਫਰ ਗੋਅ ਕੁਫਰਾਣੈ ਪਇਆ ਦਝਸੀ ॥

Var Majh, p. 142.

Guru Arjan Dev,
 ਏਕੁ ਗੁਸਾਈ ਅਲਹੁ ਮੇਰਾ ॥
 ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਦੁਹਾਂ ਨੇਬੇਰਾ ॥.....

Rag Bhairon, M5, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1136

Kabir says :

ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰਉ ਨ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਗੁਜਾਰਉ ॥
ਏਕ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਲੇ ਰਿਦੈ ਨਮਸਕਾਰਉ ॥੩॥
ਨਾ ਹਮ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਨ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ॥
ਅਲਹ ਰਾਮ ਕੇ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਪਰਾਨ ॥੪॥

Bhairon Kabir, *Ibid.*, p. 39

36. Trilochan Singh, *Social Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 5.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

38. *Ibid.*

39. *Ibid.*

40. ਟਾਂਗ ਟਾਂਗ ਕਰਿ ਹਨੇ ਨਿਦਾਨਾ ॥
ਕੂਕਰ ਜਿਮਿ ਤਿਨ ਤਜੇ ਪਰਾਨਾ ॥੩੮॥

Bachitar Natak, Ch. 8, 38, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, p. 62.

Again Guru Gobind Singh strictly reprimended the defaulters in this context in the society also :

ਕਾਹੇ ਕਉ ਲੋਗ ਠਗੇ ਠਗ ਲੋਗਨਿ
ਲੋਗ ਗਯੋ ਪਰਲੋਗ ਗਵੈਹੈ ॥
ਦੀਨ ਦਯਾਲ ਕੀ ਠੋਰ ਜਹਾ ਤਿਹਿ
ਠੋਰ ਬਿਖੇ ਤੁਹਿ ਠੋਰ ਨ ਐਹੈ ॥
ਚੇਤ ਰੇ ਚੇਤ ਅਚੇਤ ਮਹਾਂ ਜੜ
ਭੇਖ ਕੇ ਕੀਨੇ ਅਲੇਖ ਨ ਪੈਹੈ ॥੧੯॥

Sri Mukhvak Patshahi 10, Sawaiyya 19, *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 714.

41. ਜੋ ਕਰਿ ਕੋਊ ਮਸੰਦਨ ਸੋ
ਕਹੈ ਸਰਬ ਦਰਬ ਲੈ ਮੋਹਿ ਅਬੈ ਦੈ ॥
ਲੇਉ ਹੀ ਲੇਉ ਕਹੈ ਸਭ ਕੋ ਨਰ
ਕੋਊ ਨ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬਤਾਇ ਹਮੈ ਦੈ ॥੨੮॥
ਜੋ ਕਰਿ ਸੇਵ ਮਸੰਦਨ ਕੀ
ਕਹੈ ਆਨਿ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸਭੈ ਮੋਹਿ ਦੀਜੈ ॥
ਜੋ ਕਛੁ ਮਾਲ ਤਵਾਲਯ ਸੋ
ਅਬ ਹੀ ਉਠਿ ਭੇਟ ਗਮਾਰੀ ਹੀ ਕੀਜੈ ॥
ਮੇਰੇਈ ਧਯਾਨ ਧਰੋ ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸੁਰ
ਭੂਲ ਕੈ ਅਉਰ ਕੋ ਨਾਮ ਨ ਲੀਜੈ ॥
ਦੀਨੇ ਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਸੁਨੈ ਭਜਿ ਰਾਤਹਿ
ਲੀਨੇ ਬਿਨਾ ਨਹਿ ਨੈਕ ਪ੍ਰਸੀਜੈ ॥੨੯॥

Sri Mukhvak Patshahi 10, Sawaiyya 29, *Ibid.*, pp. 715.

See also *Hukamnamas* (edicts or letters) issued by Guru Gobind Singh to various Sikh congregations (*Sangats*) after the creation of the Khalsa directing his followers not to have any contact with the *masands* and to send the offerings (cash and kind) to the Guru directly.

-Ganda Singh, *Hukamname*, Pub. Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967, *Hukamnama Patshahi 10*, Nos. 46, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, etc.

42. ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ ॥

Sri Guru Granth Sahib, I, p. 689.

43. Bhai Gurdas Singh records :

ਲੋਕ ਵੇਦ ਗੁਣੁ ਗਿਆਨ ਵਿਚਿ ਅਰਧ ਸਰੀਰੀ ਮੋਖ ਦੁਆਰੀ ।

—*Varan Bhai Gurdas*, Var 5, Pauri 16, p. 99.

44. See *Dasam Granth*, Vol. II, Chapter Charitropakhayan.

45. See *Hukamname*, ed. Ganda Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967, *Hukamnamas* Nos. 31 and 32.

46. See *Hukamname*, pp. 197-231.

47. Kirpal Singh, *Badshah Darvesh Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 23.

48. *Ibid.*

49. *Ibid.*

50. As quoted by Kirpal Singh, *Badshah Darvesh Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 23.

51. Trilochan Singh, *Social Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 27.

52. *Ibid.*

53. *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

54. See 33 Swayyas, *Dasam Granth*, Swayya 28.

55. *Ibid.*, Swayya 30, verse I.

56. *Ibid.*, Swayya 31, verse I.

57. *Ibid.*, Swayya 31, verse 2.

58. *Ibid.*, Swayya 32.

59. *Ibid.*, Swayya 32, see comments by Bhai Jodh Singh in his English Translation of 33 Swayyas, Pub. by Central Gurmat Parchar Board, Lucknow, 1976, p. 42.

60. *Ibid.*, Swayya 33.

61. *Ibid.*, Swayya 33, see comments by Bhai Jodh Singh in his English Translation of the 33 Swayyas, pp. 42-43.

62. *Ibid.*, Swayya 33.

63. See Foreward, English Translation of 33 Swayyas by Jodh Singh.

64. ਪੂਰਬੀ ਨ ਪਾਰ ਪਾਵੈ ਹਿੰਗੁਲਾ ਹਿਮਾਲੈ ਧਿਆਵੈ

ਗੋਰ ਗਰਦੇਜੀ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਵੈ ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ ॥
ਜੋਗੀ ਜੋਗ ਸਾਧੈ ਪਉਨ ਸਾਧਨਾ ਕਿਤੇਕ ਬਾਧੈ
ਆਰਥ ਕੇ ਆਰਥੀ ਅਰਾਧੈ ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ ॥
ਫਰਾ ਕੇ ਫਿਰੰਗੀ ਮਾਨੈ ਕੰਧਾਰੀ ਕੁਰੈਸੀ ਜਾਨੈ
ਪਛਮ ਕੇ ਪਛਮੀ ਪਛਾਨੈ ਨਿਜ ਕਾਮ ਹੈ ॥
ਮਰਹਟਾ ਮਘੇਲੇ ਤੇਰੀ ਮਨ ਸੋ ਤਪਸਿਆ ਕਰੈ
ਦਿੜਵੈ ਤਿਲੰਗੀ ਪਹਚਾਨੈ ਧਰਮ ਧਾਮ ਹੈ ॥੨੫੪॥
ਬੰਗ ਕੇ ਬੰਗਾਲੀ ਫਿਰੰਗ ਕੇ ਫਿਰੰਗਵਾਲੀ
ਦਿੱਲੀ ਕੇ ਦਿਲਵਾਲੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਮੈ ਚਲਤ ਹੈ ॥
ਰੋਹ ਕੇ ਰੁਹੇਲੇ ਮਾਘ ਦੇਸ ਕੇ ਮਘੇਲੇ ਬੀਰ
ਬੰਗਸੀ ਬੁੰਦੇਲੇ ਪਾਪ ਪੁੰਜ ਕੋ ਮਲਤ ਹੈ ॥
ਗੋਖਾ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਵੈ ਚੀਨ ਮਚੀਨ ਕੇ ਸੀਸ ਨਯਾਵੈ
ਤਿਬਤੀ ਧਿਆਇ ਦੋਖ ਦੇਹ ਕੇ ਦਲਤ ਹੈ ॥
ਜਿਨੈ ਤੋਹਿ ਧਿਆਇਓ ਤਿਨੈ ਪੂਰਨ ਪ੍ਰਤਾਪ ਪਾਇਓ
ਸਰਬ ਧਨ ਧਾਮ ਫਲ ਫੂਲ ਸੋ ਫਲੰਤ ਹੈ ॥੨੫੫॥

-Akal Ustat, *Ibid.*, 254, 255, p. 36.

65. ਹਿੰਗਲਾ ਹਿਮਾਲੈ ਗਾਵੈ ਹਬਸੀ ਹਲੱਬੀ ਧਿਆਵੈ
ਪੂਰਬੀ ਨ ਪਾਰ ਪਾਵੈ ਆਸਾ ਤੇ ਅਨਾਸ ਹੈ ॥
-Akal Ustat 262, *Ibid.*, p. 37.
66. ਫਰਾਸੀ ਫਿਰੰਗੀ ਫਰਾਸੀਸ ਕੇ ਦੁਰੰਗੀ
ਮਕਰਾਨ ਕੇ ਮ੍ਰਿਦੰਗੀ ਤੇਰੇ ਗੀਤ ਗਾਈਅਤੁ ਹੈ ॥
ਭਖਰੀ ਕੰਧਾਰੀ ਗੋਰ ਗਖਰੀ ਗਰਦੇਜਾ ਚਾਰੀ
ਪਾਉਨ ਕੇ ਅਹਾਰੀ
ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਮ ਧਯਾਈਅਤੁ ਹੈ ॥
ਪੂਰਬ ਪਲਾਊ ਕਾਮ ਰੂਪ ਔ ਕਮਾਊ
ਸਰਬ ਠਉਰ ਮੈ ਬਿਰਾਜੈ ਜਹਾ ਜਹਾ ਜਾਈਅਤੁ ਹੈ ॥
ਪੂਰਨ ਪ੍ਰਤਾਪੀ ਜੰਤ੍ਰ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਕੇ ਅਤਾਪੀ ਨਾਥ
ਕੀਰਤਿ ਤਿਹਾਰੀ ਕੋ ਨ ਪਾਰ ਪਾਈਅਤੁ ਹੈ ॥੨੬੬॥

-Akal Ustat, *Ibid.*, p. 38.

67. See Gurcharan Singh, 'Social Harmony in Sikhism', in *Khera*, Journal of Religious Understanding, Vol. X, Issue I, Jan-March, 1991, Pub. Bhai Vir Singh Sahitaya Sadan, New Delhi, p. 37.
68. Sarup Singh Alag, *Non Sikh's View : Excellence of Sikhism*, Ludhiana, 8th Edition, 1998, pp. 46-50.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
70. Trilochan Singh, *Social Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh*, op. cit., p. 10.

71. Guru Gobind Singh condemned Emperor Aurangzeb for being a hypocrite and false Muslim. The Guru writes in *Zafarnama* :

If I had not believed in the false oaths taken on the *Quran* by you and your envoy. I would not have crippled my army which is dearer to me than my very life—*Zafarnama*, Verse 18.

...

You are neither sincere in your faith nor do you ever practise the virtues of religion. You neither recognise any God nor do you have any inward respect for Prophet Mohammed. Outwardly you hypocritically pretend to be religious; inwardly you are atheistic and utterly devoid of Islamic practices.

—*Ibid.*, Verse 46.

...

You, O Aurangzeb, who profess belief in one God and the *Qoran*, you are utterly devoid of belief both in God and the *Qoran* and at heart you do not have an atom of faith in them.

—*Ibid.*, Verse 48.

...

The *qazi* who brought the letter assured me on your belief that you actually hold me in great reverence and are prepared to act upon my advice. If there is any truth in this you should come here and show it by your action.

—*Ibid.*, Verse 56.

...

If you have any faith in peace, truth and God, then you should not hesitate to come at once.

—*Ibid.*, Verse 64.

...

If you are determined to punish the wrong doers and the oppressors, God will forgive you and bless you.

—*Ibid.*, Verse 83.

—As quoted by Trilochan Singh, *Social Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh*, op. cit., p. 9-10.

72. ਗਿਆਨਹਿ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਮਨਹੁ ਹਾਥ ਲੈ
ਕਾਤਰਤਾ ਕੁਤਵਾਰ ਬੁਹਾਰੈ ॥੨੪੯॥

Sri Krisan Avtar, Bachitar Natak, *Dasam Granth*, VI. I, 570.

73. Trilochan Singh, *Social Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh*, op. cit., p. 14.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
75. William Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, pp. 98-99.
76. *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, Var 41, pp. 662-676 in *Varan Bhai Gurdas*.
- 76a. ਸੁਣੋ ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲ ਏਹੋ ਸਾਚ
ਪਰਗਟ ਕਰਾਣਉ ਆਪਣੇ ਰਾਜ ॥
ਚਾਰ ਬਰਨ ਇਕ ਬਰਨ ਕਰਾਉਂ
- Tankhahnama, Bhai Nand Lal Ji, *Bhai Nand Lal Granthavali*, p. 199.
77. Trilochan Singh, *Social Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 22.
78. ਚਟਪਟਾਇ ਚਿਤ ਮੈ ਜਰਯੋ ਤ੍ਰਿਨ ਜਯੋ ਕ੍ਰੋਧਤ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਬੇਜ ਰੋਜ ਕੇ ਹੇਤ ਲਗ ਦਯੋ ਮਿਸ਼ਰਜੂ ਰੋਇ ॥੪॥
-Dasam Granth, Vol. I, p. 716.
79. See Edmond Candler, *The Mantle of East*, pp. 20-21 as quoted by Trilochan Singh in *Social Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 21.
80. ਹਮਰੀ ਕਰੋ ਹਾਥ ਦੈ ਰੱਛਾ ॥ ਪੂਰਨ ਹੋਇ ਚਿੱਤ ਕੀ ਇੱਛਾ ॥
ਤਵ ਚਰਨਨ ਮਨ ਰਹੈ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥ ਅਪਨਾ ਜਾਨ ਕਰੋ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਰਾ ॥੩੭੭॥
ਹਾਰੇ ਦੁਸਟ ਸਭੈ ਤੁਮ ਘਾਵਹੁ ॥ ਆਪੁ ਹਾਥ ਦੈ ਮੋਹਿ ਬਚਾਵਹੁ ॥
ਸੁਖੀ ਬਸੈ ਮੋਰੋ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾ ॥ ਸੇਵਕ ਸਿੱਖਯ ਸਭੈ ਕਰਤਾਰਾ ॥੩੭੮॥
ਮੋ ਰੱਛਾ ਨਿਜੁ ਕਰ ਦੈ ਕਰਿਯੈ ॥ ਸਭ ਬੈਰਿਨ ਕੋ ਆਜ ਸੰਘਰਿਯੈ ॥
ਪੂਰਨ ਹੋਇ ਹਮਾਰੀ ਆਸਾ ॥ ਤੋਰਿ ਭਜਨ ਕੀ ਰਹੈ ਪਿਯਾਸਾ ॥੩੭੯॥
ਤੁਮਹਿ ਛਾਡਿ ਕੋਈ ਅਵਰ ਨ ਧਯਾਉ ॥ ਜੋ ਬਰ ਚਾਹੋ ਸੁ ਤੁਮ ਤੇ ਪਾਉ ॥
ਸੇਵਕ ਸਿੱਖਯ ਹਮਾਰੇ ਤਾਰਿਯਹਿ ॥ ਚੁਨ ਚੁਨ ਸ਼ਤ੍ਰੁ ਹਮਾਰੇ ਮਾਰਿਯਹਿ ॥੩੮੦॥
ਆਪੁ ਹਾਥ ਦੈ ਮੁਝੈ ਉਬਰਿਯੈ ॥ ਮਰਨ ਕਾਲ ਕਾ ਤ੍ਰਾਸ ਨਿਵਰਿਯੈ ॥
ਹੂਜੇ ਸਦਾ ਹਮਾਰੇ ਪੱਛਾ ॥ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਸਿਧੁਜ ਜੂ ਕਰਿਯਹੁ ਰੱਛਾ ॥੩੮੧॥
ਰਾਖਿ ਲੇਹੁ ਮੁਹਿ ਰਾਖਨਹਾਰੇ ॥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸੰਤ ਸਹਾਇ ਪਿਯਾਰੇ ॥
ਦੀਨਬੰਧੁ ਦੁਸ਼ਟਨ ਕੇ ਹੰਤਾ ॥ ਤੁਮ ਹੋ ਪੁਰੀ ਚਤੁਰਦਸ ਕੰਤਾ ॥੩੮੨॥
ਕਾਲ ਪਾਇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਪੁ ਧਰਾ ॥ ਕਾਲ ਪਾਇ ਸ਼ਿਵਜੂ ਅਵਤਰਾ ॥
ਕਾਲ ਪਾਇ ਕਰਿ ਬਿਸ਼ਨ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਾ ॥ ਸਕਲ ਕਾਲ ਕਾ ਕੀਯਾ ਤਮਾਸ਼ਾ ॥੩੮੩॥
ਜਵਨ ਕਾਲ ਜੋਗੀ ਸ਼ਿਵ ਕੀਯੋ ॥ ਬੇਦ ਰਾਜ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਜੂ ਥੀਯੋ ॥
ਜਵਨ ਕਾਲ ਸਭ ਲੋਕ ਸਵਾਰਾ ॥ ਨਮਸਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਤਾਹਿ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥੩੮੪॥
ਜਵਨ ਕਾਲ ਸਭ ਜਗਤ ਬਨਾਯੋ ॥ ਦੇਵ ਦੈਤ ਜੱਛਨ ਉਪਜਾਯੋ ॥
ਆਦਿ ਅੰਤਿ ਏਕੈ ਅਵਤਾਰਾ ॥ ਸੋਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਮਝਿਯਹੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥੩੮੫॥
ਨਮਸਕਾਰ ਤਿਸ ਹੀ ਕੋ ਹਮਾਰੀ ॥ ਸਕਲ ਪ੍ਰਜਾ ਜਿਨ ਆਪ ਸਵਾਰੀ ॥
ਸਿਵਕਨ ਕੋ ਸਵਗੁਨ ਸੁਖ ਦੀਯੋ ॥ ਸ਼ਤ੍ਰੁਨ ਕੋ ਪਲ ਮੋ ਬਧ ਕੀਯੋ ॥੩੮੬॥

Ramavatar Benati Chaupai, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, pp. 1386-87.

LEGACY AND IMPACT

Some people think that Guru Gobind Singh's message is different from that of Guru Nanak and other Sikh Gurus. They argue that while Guru Nanak preached love and peace, Guru Gobind Singh preached revolt and militarism and he transformed the peace loving Sikhs into militant force. This hypothesis is not correct. The teachings of Guru Gobind Singh were essentially the same as those of Guru Nanak. The background of the theology and temporal attitude, personal philosophy, social philosophy and political ideology of Guru Gobind Singh is grounded in the preaching of the earlier Sikh Gurus. He did not bring any change in the original doctrines and essence of Sikhism. He simply strived to bring to completion the message of spiritual and social unity of his predecessor Gurus. Guru Nanak the founder of Sikhism had preached the doctrine of protest against injustice, self-surrender and sacrifice. He brought awareness of human rights to the masses. Guru Arjan Dev gave his life, but did not renounce his principles. Guru Hargobind had taken every step for the security and defence of the Sikh organisation. He built the first *Takhat* of the Sikhs called Sri Akal Takhat Sahib (The Throne of the Almighty), in front of Sri Harimandir Sahib.¹ Guru Tegh Bahadur attained martyrdom for the protection of freedom of worship. Then the circumstances changed radically for the Sikhs during the reign of Aurangzeb. The problem became one of the survival for the Sikh leadership and the Sikh people. Should they

die fighting or should they die quietly like sheep? Guru Gobind Singh chose the first option. He preferred to die fighting. The Guru seeks this boon from the Almighty and aspires :

When the end of my life comes,
I would like to die fighting on the battlefield of life.
(*Dasam Granth*, p. 99.)

Guru Gobind Singh retained the notion of socio-political unity of Sikhism and reconciled politics and religion as two facets of the same doctrine of spiritual and social unity- *Miri* and *Piri* or *Shakti* and *Bhakti*. There are four *Takhts* associated with Guru Gobind Singh.² The Guru fought many battles against tyranny of the Mughal Emperors but not for territory and wealth. The Guru was a seeker of Truth, and did not care for victory because spiritual glorification does not require mundane success. The real spirit of Sikhism remained intact and his policies did not dilute the essence of religion. Arnold Toynbee wrongly comments that Sikhism was corrupted by politics in the hands of Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh. The Gurus struggled for spirituality and not for temporal power and their actions were motivated by upholding righteousness and spirituality.

Guru Gobind Singh wanted committed Sikhs, who would be ready to die for the divine cause. The first great service was to organise his own people to prepare them and to offer resistance to the oppression to which non-Muslim people were subjected by religious fanaticism and intolerance of the theocratic state. For the Guru, to resist tyranny was a sacred duty and the use of arms was just and valid in such a situations. Guru Gobind Singh was a practical philosopher and a humanitarian thinker. His way to God was through universal love. He wrote :

Listen for one and all.
The supreme Truth which I declare is,
that those who love all of God's creators
will merge in the Lord.
(*Dasam Granth*, p. 14)

It is virtue of love that forms the basis for peace, freedom, equality, goodwill and the hope of one unified world. Guru Gobind

Singh was an uncompromising monotheist. He rejected all sorts of polytheism and duality. He believed that God (*Onkar*) is the creator of the whole cosmos. The almighty is omnipresent and present in all beings. The light of God pervades in all. All men are the children of one God. Union with God is the goal of life. God and man's relationship is that of complete dedication and love. Through spiritual orientation and service of humanity one can attain God. The path to God is through spiritual and religious efforts. One has to be God oriented. Guru Gobind Singh rejected formalism of religion. He condemned idol worship, rituals and the practice of fasts and penances. The Guru said such practices are of no avail. They only serve to inflate the ego. True devotion is marked by humility, selflessness, service and *nam simran*. The Guru preached his Sikhs to lead a simple life, to have complete faith in God and to abide by the teachings of the *Gurus*. Only those who serve their fellow men attain holiness and come closer to God. The Guru stressed on the unity of mankind, rejected all sorts of social discriminations and preached equality and brotherhood. Guru Gobind Singh was a great reformer. He not only preached social emancipation but also stressed the need for a balanced growth of the individual personality. He outlined his pattern for the ideal man-i.e. a person who fights against evil within himself and in the world outside. He denounced asceticism, renunciation and the life of a recluse or isolation from the social and moral responsibility. His ideal man was to be a man of action (*Karam Yogi*)- a person keen on reforming himself and his community. Such a person has to follow certain values or morals. The virtues of truthfulness, compassion, courage, discipline and sacrifice makes one strong and pure. For the Guru truth was highest virtue. He condemned hypocrisy, treachery and breach of faith even in war strategy. The *Zafarnama* is a testament of the Tenth Guru. It embodies the spirit of fearlessness, struggle against misrule and fanaticism, it explains the basis of the Guru's fight against Mughal oppression and feudal tyranny of the Hill Rajas. His argument was that if the strong and virtuous ignored injustice and high handedness, it could lead to the end of all organised life and a sane society. Therefore, armed struggle for the preservation of basic freedom and human equality was unavoidable.

The Guru believed in *Degh* (charity) and *Tegh* (sword or courage). Guru Gobind Singh's message is one of optimism of the *Fateh* (victory) of good over evil. The Guru says victory comes to those who are truthful and fearless. He composed the greeting of the *Khalsa* as :

*Wah Guru ji Ka Khalsa,
Wah Guru ji Ki Fateh.*

The legend on the coins of the Sikh rulers- *Degh*, *Tegh*, *Fateh* is the legacy of Guru Gobind Singh. It is undeniable that Guru Gobind Singh must be counted as the greatest Indian of all ages. The objective he attempted to achieve was great and laudable. The means which he adopted were such as only a comprehensive mind and a creative genius could envisaged. To an atmosphere of despair, gloom, ignorance and degradation he brought a message of hope and deliverance, and a will to do or to die. The Guru not only brought into operation a new moral force of an intensely dynamic character but was careful to harness into disciplined martial strength and material equipment as he possibly could. He was a saint as well as a soldier and his ideal was to establish a *Panth* (commonwealth) of *sant sipahis* (soldier-saints). Guru Gobind Singh's creation of the *Khalsa* symbolizes spiritual unity of egalitarian social pattern. Through the creation of the *Khalsa* Guru Gobind Singh tried to reconcile transcendence with human existence. He declared war against tyranny and oppression and had created the *Khalsa* to carry it on. And for the future also, the *Khalsa* became a guarantee for the revival of mental and spiritual strength of the Indian masses and a strong bulwark against oppression, tyranny and bigotry.

Whatever else he might have been, Guru Gobind Singh was first and foremost a great religious leader. A person of saintly disposition, highly spiritual and with a complete resignation to the will of god (*Hukam*), could have had a vision like him and contributed so significantly to social and spiritual reforms.

The image of the Guru, the man destined by the Almighty to fulfil 'His High Purposes' is given in the *bani* of Guru Gobind Singh, yet the Guru did not claim for himself anything more than

being a human, yoked to the service of His Master and His humanity. Guru Gobind Singh declared categorically :

Those who call me the Supreme Lord
Will fall into the pit of hell.
Recognise me as His servant
let there be no doubt, whatever on this point.
I am the slave of the Supreme Being
come to watch the drama of Creation.

(Dasam Granth, p. 57)

The creation of the *Khalsa* was the greatest achievement of Guru Gobind Singh. The implications of the *Khalsa* were enormous and had far reaching consequences. In fact the *Khalsa* brought out a revolutionary change in the mind of the people and aroused their dormant energies to positive purposes to root out the evils of caste discrimination and to protect the honour, dignity and freedom of people against tyranny of the autocratic state. The *Khalsa* ignited with the spirit of dedication, love, service and sacrifice for the cause of *Dharma* was ever ready to face death for the sake of its ideals and thus made significant contributions in the defence of the people and the country ever since its birth. It is evidently clear from the history of the last three centuries that the *Khalsa* served as a force of strength for the protection of the people of Punjab against the oppression and tyranny of the State.

Guru Gobind Singh's handiwork; the *Khalsa*, carved its way to renown and glory and played a noble part in the annals of Indian history. The *Khalsa's* greatest contribution to the nation was the wresting of Punjab and the adjoining lands upto the frontiers from the clutches of the Afghan invaders during the times of the *Misals* (Sikh confederacies). It is not improbable that if the *Khalsa* had not done so, most of the frontier tracts might have been lost, even geographically to India forever. The Guru's *Khalsa* have long gone the way of human developments and they have passed through many ebbs and tides. They have defended our frontiers, brought economic prosperity and green revolution and even now, when they constitute roughly only two and half percent of the total population of India, they hold a significant position and they wield an influence

entirely out of proportion to their numbers. All this they primarily owe to the spirit of dedication and self sacrifice and adherence to Sikh doctrines that their Great Guru Gobind Singh had installed into them.

The creation of the *Khalsa* aimed at raising man above his ego-centredness and thus produce an ideal man. It aimed at changing the social and political environment which hindered such development. The *Khalsa* was to act as the custodian of ethical values. Accordingly great emphasis was laid on the maintenance of the ethical standard set for the *Khalsa*.

The acceptance of the *Khalsa* ideology naturally meant becoming a dedicated whole time saint-soldier. An important part of the *Khalsa* discipline was the dedication of one's all; body, soul and belongings to the Guru and abiding by the Will of God. It was a hard test and yet thousands of Sikhs lived upto it.

The *Khalsa* has to live as a servant of the community, as a helper of the underprivileged and downtrodden. By this one event of the creation of the *Khalsa* the Guru changed his followers psychologically and gave them a distinct identity and a spirit of divine brotherhood. The Guru warned that those who took *Khanda de pahul*, they must behave like warriors and remain free and fearless. The Guru impressed on them the need to conduct themselves with honour and dignity, to give up caste taboos, their old rituals and religious beliefs and practices and to keep intact their outer uniform and inner purity. The Guru declared that so long as the *Khalsa* maintain its virtue, it will wear the crown of glory :

So long as the *Khalsa* maintains its identity,
It will retain its honour and splendour;
Once it follows devious ways,
it will lose the blessings of the Guru.

(*Sarab Loh Granth*)

According to Guru Gobind Singh, the ideal of the *Khalsa* is self perfection-physical, moral and mental. A *Khalsa* is the ultimate model for a saint-soldier. He is also a social worker and reformer. The Guru's concept of the *Khalsa Panth* was a fully democratic compact, of a corporate community; was well armed and ever

ready to continue its struggle against any form of oppression. The Guru did not believe in the superiority of numbers. He wanted quality and baptised only those who came up to his standard. The individual demonstration of valour, virtue and wisdom of the *Khalsa* were remarkable. The Guru regarded himself as an integral part of the *Khalsa* and paid compliments to them for any deed of heroism that was brought to his notice. Guru Gobind Singh made it clear that the corporate movement was of greater significance than any individual, however highly placed he may be. All his achievements, he says, be owed to the *Khalsa* :

Through their favour I am exalted,
Otherwise, there are millions of lowly men like me.

(*Dasam Granth*, p. 716)

Guru Gobind Singh was the most popular hero of the Indian History. A 'beau ideal' of the Punjabis, the stories of his *prodigious* strength, valour and chivalry multiplied and he became a legendary figure in his life time. He is said to have the magnetic charm to transform an ordinary bird into ferocious hawk. The skill of his art of archery was par excellence. His spirit of humanity was also incomparable. The tips of his arrows were said to have been mounted with gold to provide for the family of the foe. The Guru's very image became a living vision for the folk of the Punjab. It became part of the permanent ethos in the psyche of Punjabis. They pictured him leading them to battle through their crisis on his roan stallion as on one hand fluttered his white hawk, in the other flashed his sabre. He was popularly remembered as- *nile ghore da asvar* (rider of the blue horse), *chitian bazanwala* (Lord of the white hawks) and *Kalgidhar Patshah* (the True King, wearer of plumes). While Guru Gobind Singh's picture was in the minds of the people, his words were on their lips.³ His image has captivated the masses. He was the source of inspiration for the downtrodden. A symbol of reaffirmation of faith for the defeated, a saviour of the oppressed and the sufferers.

Guru Gobind Singh was a mystic with a 'will-to-action'. The *Zafarnama* reaffirms Guru Gobind Singh's relentless and implicit faith in good action against evil, and kindled defiance in every soul

for the cause of justice. His heroic ballads with martial beats in their poetics are full of chivalry (*vir rasa*) for the motivation of the crusaders.

Guru Gobind Singh was the 'Superman' and the 'Creative Genius' of his age. Everything he wrote and spoke or did there was a note of buoyant hope *chardi kala* and the conviction that even if he lost his life, his mission was bound to succeed. The popular imagery of the Guru, its glory and impact would remain the same till immortality. The services offered by Guru Gobind Singh for the protection and preservation of the heritage of India is enormous. Not only the Punjab and the Sikh community, but the whole India is grateful to him for the great deeds done and sacrifices made by the Guru for protecting the land, people and culture of our country.

The Guru introduced new innovations for establishing social solidarity in our pluralistic society. He brought about a great social change and transformation in the orthodox infrastructure of Hindu society segmented into vicious division of castes. The Guru brought a revolutionary change in the minds of people and successfully inspired them to utilise their potential for positive purposes and root out the evils of caste ridden social hierarchy. He took various practical steps to bind various communities in abiding love through the advocacy of his famous logo of - *Manas ki jaat sabhe eko pehchanbo*.

A great spiritual savior and emancipator of the suffering humanity, Guru Gobind Singh was also the political deliverer of the Indians in whom he infused courage, valour and martial spirit and thereby enabled them to fight against their oppressors and win back their honour, dignity and political freedom. The Guru was the harbinger of the spirit of patriotism and nationalism and occupies a unique place in the national history of India.

He was also a scholar and a philosopher. The enormous storehouse of heroic literature composed by him gave a healthy turn to the degenerated trend of the Braj Literature which had been reduced a mere luxury of the ruling class and the feudal chiefs. The Guru gave it a spiritual treatment and social orientation. The Guru had not only enriched the Indian literature with enormous

vocabulary but also made it a vehicle of psychological treatment and mental health. His writings have proved a great motivating force to Indian masses for generations. Swami Vivekananda (*The Complete works of Swami Vivekananda*, 1956) was highly impressed by the life and works of Guru Gobind Singh. Swami Vivekananda hailed the holy words of *Wah-i-Guru* (Victory to the Glory) as the future slogan of the Indian multitude⁵ and Rabindranath Tagore wrote poems and articles on the life and works of Guru Gobind Singh.⁶ There is a special genre in Modern Bengali Literature attributed to the heroic deeds and patriotism of Guru Gobind Singh as a national hero. India owes a deep sense of gratitude to the Great Guru for arousing the dormant energies of the people to be utilised for the national cause.

In the history of human civilisation, Guru Gobind Singh was called upon to play a terrific role in a difficult situation against monstrous tyranny. He created history with a record of suffering for faith and freedom. Like a true *Karam Yogi* he responded admirably to the call of duty of life. He was able to provide perfect leadership in every way. His burning patriotism, his capacity to take risk and his will to resist evil and accept all kinds of sufferings cheerfully, his attuning to the Will of God, his deep concern for spiritual, social, political, cultural, national and humanitarian issues, his endeavours and sacrifices and achievements are without a parallel in the history of mankind. The legacy and the impact of Guru Gobind Singh are exquisitely valuable. His teachings have great relevance for the modern man to build up a global society with a commitment to peace and goodwill of all humanity across all sorts of cultural constraints and geographical boundaries.

Guru Gobind Singh had a secular attitude, a global vision and a universal outlook. His life and works have left a deep impact on the Indian society and world civilisation. The perusal of such a great life will be for any one a moral lesson, an inspiration and significant spiritual experience which certainly will have an abiding influence in one's life. The year 1999, which witnessed the celebrations of the Third Birth Centenary of the Creation of the *Khalsa* at a grand scale all over the world showed the gratitude of the people towards the services of the great Guru for the welfare of

humanity. And all right thinking men and women who have faith in God as well as faith in equality, fraternity and freedom will admire Guru Gobind Singh's personality, contribution and impact.

Some of the events and incidents of Guru's life as a soldier and a religious man are well known, but the whole account of his life's achievements, writings and preachings still need a more systematic attention for the amelioration of the suffering humanity. His compositions should be better known. The personality of the Guru is like a great hero in the struggle for the spiritual, cultural and political emancipation and uplift of the Indian masses and of all suppressed humanity has great potentiality to attract the attention of global society of modern times. It will develop a world-vision, based on larger humanistic values, for which the great Guru made uncomparable sacrifices and immortalised them in his hymns.

The occasion of the Tricentenary Celebrations of the Creation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh at the International level was the most befitting tribute to the Great Master as an act of appreciation for his invaluable contributions to built an international brotherhood beyond the barriers of geographical limits and cultural boundaries. The occasion provided a significant opportunity for advancing the Guru's message of equality, fraternity, freedom, harmony, altruistic service and goodwill for the welfare of the whole humanity without any discrimination of caste, creed, gender, nationality, ethnic and economic factors. It will help us to preserve the roots of our spiritual and cultural heritage as well as to promote the preachings of the Great Guru to built a co-operative world society which is an acute need of the present times.

As a token of homage and gratitude to the legacy of Guru Gobind Singh. The 300th anniversary of the succession of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* as the *Guru* proclaimed by the great Guru before his demise at Nanded on November 7, 1708 A.D. has been planned to be celebrated in a grand manner by the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, the State Govt. of Punjab, the State Govt. of Maharashtra, the Central Govt. of India and the Sikh Sangats spread all over the globe. As a part of the tercentenary Celebration of *Guru-ta-gaddi Diwas* (October 29, 2008) has been projected as

International Day of Commitment to Secularism and protection of egalitarian ideas. The United Nation is being approached for this purpose.

Notes and References:

1. A brief account of the connotation, function and significance of the term *Takhat* in the Sikh community has been narrated below for the benefit of the readers :

Takhats of Sikh Religion

Takhat is a Persian word. The dictionary meaning of the term *Takhat* is, the royal throne, a sovereign chair of the state, a seat from where the state law is promulgated and enforced. In context of the Indian history the simple connotation of the word *Takhat* signifying the imperial throne means a concept of total and all pervasive focus of worldly temporal power and was supposed to inherent in the sovereignty of the Delhi Sultanat and Mughal Emperors of the Delhi Empire. But the connotation of the term *Takhat* is much wider in Sikh context, for the profound reason, that the concept of the co-ordination of the secular sovereignty and the spiritual domain (kingdom of God) has been accepted as a fundamental doctrine of Sikhism. It is precisely in this sense that the word is used in the Sikh scripture. The dichotomy of the spiritual and secular domains has been generally accepted. Hypothetically, there cannot be more than one *Takhat* in an empire. For a true and logically whole the empire must tend to acquire a total oecumenical sway therefore the doctrine of co-existence of more than one *Takhat* is a self contradiction. But the Sikh doctrines of double-Sovereignty, spiritual and temporal (*Miri* and *Piri*) envisages a sway over both the minds and souls of Sikhs ever since the advent of Guru Nanak (founder of Sikh faith), therefore the co-existence of thrones of double sovereignty become rational and legitimate in this context. In the Sikh World-View, where the status of the Guru has been equated with that of the *Saccha Patshah* (the true king) and having a meeting with the Guru was considered audience in the *Darbar* (court). It was however, when Guru Hargobind (the sixth Guru of the Sikhs), publicly declared himself as the supreme head of the spiritual and secular domains by wearing two swords of *Miri* and *Piri* at the time of his pontification (after the martyrdom of his father Guru Arjan Dev under the order of Emperor Jahangir) in 1606 on a raised platform (named Akal Takhat, meaning the Throne of the Almighty) in front of the Harmandir Sahib (The Golden Temple) from where he would exercise this dual sovereignty, that the word *Takhat* came to be associated in the Sikh sphere with a specific

connotation. This seat of double sovereignty, therefore, is the first *Takhat* of the Sikhs. The Akal Takhat is larger than any of the thrones built by the Mughal Emperors at Agra or Delhi.

There are five recognized *Takhats* (seats of authority) of the Sikhs i.e. Shri Akal Takhat Sahib, Amritsar; Takhat Sri Keshgarh Sahib, Anandpur Sahib; Takhat Shri Harmandar Sahib, Patna; Takhat Shri Hazur Sahib, Nanded and Takhat Shri Damdama Sahib, Talwandi Sabo. These five *Takhats* are historically associated with the lives of the Sikh *Gurus* from where they have exercised their authority from time to time. Therefore, all the *Takhats* are sacred places for the Sikhs. The first two *Takhats* were established by the *Gurus* themselves and the remaining three have been founded by the *Khalsa Panth* (Sikh community). These *Takhats* play an important role in deciding the religious and socio-political issues of the Sikh community, the authenticity of the legitimacy of these *Takhats* lies in the belief of the Sikhs that the Guru is mystically present in the decisions taken here in the presence of the Holy *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* with the consent of the *Panj Piaras* (the five chosen baptised Sikhs). No worldly ruler or leader is represented on these *Takhats*. Only the Holy Book *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is placed here for worship and guidance. The service and administration of these *Takhats* are endorsed by the *Panth*. The affairs of these *Takhats* are managed by *Jathedars* appointed by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (the representative body of the Sikh community). except that of the Takhat Sri Harmandir Sahib Patna and Takhat Sacch Khand Sri Hazur Sahib Naded. The *Jathedars* of these two *Takhats* are appointed by the local bodies of the Sikh *Sangats*.

The Sikh dominion of religion in the world of phenomena is bound up with the concept of space. Therefore, the division of jurisdiction of these *Takhats* seems to be grounded in metaphysical postulates of the ancient Indian concept of acceptance of geographical dominions in the religious sphere. However, the Sikh community is no longer confined to the Indian sub-continent. It has become a global community in the present context.

2. Details of the *Takhats* associated with Guru Gobind Singh are given below :

i. Takhat Shri Harmandir Sahib, Patna (Bihar)

The city of Patna is associated with the travels of Guru Nanak Dev (the first Guru of the Sikhs) and Guru Tegh Bahadur (ninth Guru of the Sikhs). It is the birth place of Guru Gobind Singh (tenth Guru of the Sikhs), who also spent his childhood in Patna and was educated here. A number of *Hukamnamas* (orders) were issued by the Sikh *Gurus* from Patna Sahib. The city enjoyed the status of a significant Sikh centre

(*Sangat*) in the seventeenth century. In 18th century the Takhat Shri Harmandir Sahib, Patna was running a flourishing Pathshala (school) under the guidance of the priests for teaching the tenets of Sikh philosophy. The importance of Patna has been enhanced with the presence of the seat of Sikh authority.

ii. *Takhat Shri Keshgarh Sahib, Anandpur (Punjab)*

This seat of Sikh authority is situated at Anandpur Sahib, original name Chak Nanaki. The village was founded by Guru Tegh Bahadur. His son and successor Guru Gobind Singh developed the village into a town and named it Anandpur. The town was fortified and Guru's *Darbar* (court) was held here. A rich treasure of religious and patriotic literature was produced here under the patronage of the Guru. The order of the *Khalsa* was founded here on the famous Baisakhi day of the year 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru led his struggle for defence against the atrocities of the Mughals from Anandpur. A number of Sikh shrines and historical places are situated in and around Anandpur Sahib.

iii. *Takhat Sacch Khand Sri Hazur Sahib, Nanded (Maharashtra)*

This *Takhat* commemorates the sacred memory of Guru Gobind Singh, who spent his last days here. It was from this place that Guru Gobind Singh had sent his disciple Banda Singh Bahadur (original name Madho Das Bairagi) to Punjab with a devout mission to face the challenge of the Mughal atrocities, punish the offenders and establish rule of justice in 1708. A number of Sikh shrines and historical places associated with Guru Gobind Singh and his disciples are situated around the Takhat Sacch Khand Shri Hazoor Sahib.

iv. *Takhat Shri Damdama Sahib, Sabo Ki Talwandi, (Distt. Bhatinda, Punjab)*

This *Takhat* was founded in the sacred memory of Guru Gobind Singh after the partition of India in the year 1959-60. Damdama Sahib is a holy Sikh shrine of great historical importance and sanctity where Guru Gobind Singh halted for rest (*Dam*) after evacuating the fort of Anandpur Sahib (1704) and his last battle (Mukatsar) with the Mughals in 1705. Therefore the place has been named as Damdama Sahib. During his stay at this place, Guru Gobind Singh got prepared new recensions of *Shri Guru Granth Sahib* (the holy scripture of the Sikhs) with addition of Guru Tegh Bahadur's *Salokas* (hymns). Four *Birs* (manuscript copies) of *Shri Guru Granth Sahib* were prepared here with the help of Bhai Mani Singh and Baba Deep Singh. It is believed that these *Birs* were placed at the four *Takhats*. These recensions of *Guru Granth Sahib* are popularly known as *Damdami Bir*s. On account of literary works carried out here. Guru Gobind Singh blessed the place with the title of *Guru Ki Kashi*. The Guru professed the future glory and

fame of the place as a great Sikh centre of learning and habitat of scholars. The famous organisation of the *Damdami Taksal* was also founded at this place.

All these *Takhats* represent the same essence of the Sikh doctrines and Sikh ethos, irrespective of their jurisdiction and size. Therefore, all the *Takhats* are of equal importance for the Sikhs. However, Sri Akal Takhat Sahib, Amritsar holds the supreme place.

3. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs : Vol. I : 1469-1839*, Pub. Oxford Press, Bombay, 1977, p. 96.
4. See various Volumes of *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 1956 (Reprint, Calcutta, 1968); also *Common Bases of Hinduism*, Vol. III, 1960, p. 384; *Memoirs of European Travels*, pp. 297, 325, 328. See also Prof. Puran Singh's, *The Story of Swami Ram*, Pub. by Kalyani Publications, Ludhiana, 1974 Edition, pp. 91-92.
For detailed study of the impact of Guru Gobind Singh on Swami Vivekananda see Jasbir Kaur Ahuja's book *Swami Vivekananda on Guru Gobind Singh*, (Patiala, 1987) and Prof. Satish K. Kapoor's article 'The Hero And the Ideal' - 'An Interpretation of Swami Vivekananda's View of Guru Gobind Singh', Pub. in *Guru Gobind Singh And Creation of the Khalsa*, ed. Madanjit Kaur, Pub. Guru Nanak Dev University.
5. See *Complete works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. VII, Fifth enlarged edition, 1958 pp. 325-328.
6. Rabindranath Tagore, 'Beer Guru', *Balak*, 1885. It was subsequently included in Tagore's *Itihas*, Calcutta, 1969 (See *Rabindra Rachanavali*, I, Calcutta, 1980). Besides these poems, Tagore also respectfully referred to the contributions of the Guru in the five articles pub. in *Rabindra Rachanabali*, Vol. XI, Calcutta, 1961. Beside Tagore, Jibenderanath Datta wrote poems on the life and mission of the Guru, Pub. *Prabashi*, November-December 1909, July-August 1918.
7. Prof. Himadari Banerjee of Vishav Bharti University Calcutta has made micro-study of the subject — 'Guru Gobind Singh in Bengali Writings', Published in *Guru Gobind Singh and Creation of Khalsa*, Ed. Madanjit Kaur, Pub. by Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2000, pp. 104-115.

GRANDEUR OF THE KHALSA; THE SIKH COINS*

The significance of coins as a source of history is of outstanding importance. The coins are connected with the political, administrative, social, economic, religious and cultural life of the period to which they belong. The cognitive, material and normative aspects of the culture of the people reflected through their belief system and world-view is very much indebted to the science of numismatics. Coming to the Sikh coinage, we find that they are an important source of Punjab History and the grandeur of the *Khalsa* heritage.

From very ancient times issuing a circulating coin was a royal prerogative. The coins were issued by the ancient as well as medieval Indian rulers. Foreign invaders who conquered parts of India and, established their rule also issued coins. All these categories of coins belonging to different periods in the Indian

*This study is based on C.J. Rodgers' collection of the Sikh coins preserved in the British Museum, London. The photocopies of these coins were originally published in C.J. Rodgers article 'on the coins of the Sikhs', pub. in *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* Part I, Vol. 50, 1881. pp. 71-93. A large collection of Sikh coins is preserved in Lahore Museum (Pakistan). Many of these coins are available in my personal collection and in many other collections preserved in the Museums and personal collections in India and abroad. For detailed study of the Sikh coins see Surinder Singh, *Sikh coinage, Symbol of Sikh Sovereignty*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2004.

sub-continent bear legends (usually from their religious texts), name and title of the king and place as well as the date of minting. But we find a deviation from this tradition among the Sikhs, whose coins were issued not by the royalty but by military leaders of the *Khalsa* who led the struggle for political freedom in Punjab against the fanatic Mughal rulers and the oppression by the Afghan invaders from across the frontiers; in the sacred names of their *Gurus*.

The Sikh coins did not bear the name of any chief or ruler. The Sikh chiefs and the *Khalsa* held a firm faith that their achievements were a blessing of their *Gurus* and they were only the humble servants of the Almighty ready to live and die for the service of humanity.

The history of the Sikh coinage begin with Banda Singh Bahadur, the brave Sikh hero, who led the Sikh struggle for political freedom against the tyranny of the Mughals after the death of Guru Gobind Singh. Banda Singh Bahadur was assigned this task at Nanded (South India) by the Guru before his death in 1708. Banda Singh Bahadur came to North, announced his mission and thousands of the *Khalsa* and peasants of Punjab joined him. He conquered Sirhind (1710) and fixed upon Mukhlispur, a pleasant hilly place near Sadhaura, as his headquarters. He repaired old neglected fort and renamed it Lohgarh (Iron Castle). Banda Singh Bahadur proclaimed the establishment of the first Sikh rule, assumed royal authority and struck coins in the name of the *Gurus*. His coins bore the following inscription in Persian language on the obverse side :

Sikka-i-Zad bar har do alam Tegh Nanak Wahib ast:

Fateh Gobind Singh Shah Shahan Fazal Sacha Sahib ast.

(By the Grace of the True Lord is struck the coins in the two Worlds. The Sword of Nanak is the granter of all boons, and the Victory is of Guru Gobind Singh the King of Kings).

The reverse side of Banda's coins had the following inscription in Persian language in the praise of his newly founded capital:

Zarab-b-aman-u-Dahar maswarat sahar

Zinat-ul-Takht Mubarak Bakht.

(Struck in the city of Peace, illustrating the beauty of Civic life, and the ornament of the blessed throne).¹

The minting of first Sikh coin signifies the role of Gobind Singh in placing the *Khalsa* as a political power on the canvas of history. Furthermore, the Sikh concept of sovereignty as Divine Grace explicitly expressed in the *bani* (holy compositions) of Guru Nanak (*Asa Di Var*) and Guru Gobind Singh (*Akal Ustat, Jaap Sahib, Sawayyas, Gyan Prabodh and Sarab Loh Granth*) and the notion of the Supremacy of the Sikh Gurus to the earthly monarch by the *Khalsa* is reflected in a most sophisticated and humble manner through this type of unique and specific coinage.

Banda Singh Bahadur also introduced an official seal for his state documents, *firman*s (orders) and letters patent. It contained the following inscription (in Persian) expressive of his deep sense of devotion and loyalty to the Gurus :

*Deg-o-Teh-o-Fateh-o-Nusrat-Be-dirang
Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.*

[The Kettle (the symbol of means to serve the people with food) and the Sword (the symbol of power to protect the weak and helpless), Victory and ready Patronage have been obtained from Guru Nanak-Guru Gobind Singh).]

This logos of the *Degh, Tegh* and *Fateh* is the legacy of Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru believed in *Degh* (charity and cauldron in the Guru's *langar*, free kitchen), and *Tegh* (sword of the *Khalsa*, the symbol of courage and valour). Guru Gobind Singh's message is one of optimism of the *Fateh* (victory of good over evil). The Guru says Victory comes to those who are truthful and fearless. He composed the famous greeting of the *Khalsa* as :

*Wahe Guru ji ka Khalsa
Wahe Guru ji ki Fateh.*

(The *Khalsa* are the chosen of God.
Victory be to our God.)

The essence of this legend is deeply rooted in the ethos inculcated in the *Khalsa* by the preachings of Guru Gobind Singh. The advent of the *Khalsa* has been declared as manifestation of the

Divine by Guru Gobind Singh (*Bachitar Natak*) with an ardent mission to lead a war of righteousness (*Dharam Yudh*) against forces of evil and oppression and act for the protection and defence of freedom, liberty and equality. Banda Singh Bahadur fulfilled this mission and established the *Khalsa* ideal of social equality and political freedom at the grass - root level. It is a historical fact that, Banda Singh Bahadur abolished *Zamindari* (Feudal system) in the territories conquered by him and distributed land among the tillers. He annihilated social inequality born out of caste prejudice and appointed the lowliest of the low as *thanedars* (the officer incharge of a *thana* and commander of a fort) and *tehsildars* (the officer incharge of a *tehsil*, a unit of administration) in the *parganas* (a sub-division of a province). After the capture and execution of Banda Singh Bahadur (1716) Punjab again passed under the Mughal rule and became subject to almost regular invasions by the Afghans (Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah Abdali). In the post- Banda period the worst type of persecution of the *Khalsa* was started under the imperial *firman*s (orders) of Emperor Farruk - Siyyar. The Sikhs were declared outlaws and prices were fixed on their heads. The Mughal ruler hurled intensive military campaigns for the complete liquidation of the Sikh community. But the *Khalsa* kept their spirits high and carried on the mission of Guru Gobind Singh with greater vigour and enthusiasm. They intensified their fight with the Mughals and the Afghans to free their homeland from the alien rulers.

The second Sikh coin was struck in 1761 during the temporary occupation of the state capital, Lahore by the Sikhs under the command of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. It had on it the following inscription in Persian :

Deg-o-Tegh-o-Fateh-o-Nusrat-be-dirang
*Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.*²

This legend pertains to the same meaning as that of the first Sikh coin struck by Banda Singh Bahadur. The third Sikh coin was issued by the *Khalsa Panth* (the Sikh Commonwealth) after the conquest of Lahore by three *Sardars* - Gujjar Singh Bhangi, Lehna Singh Bhangi and Sobha Singh Kanhaiya in April 1765. The Sikhs

proclaimed their Sovereignty and issued coins on this occasion. They repeated the inscription which had already appeared on the coins of Banda Singh Bahadur and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. The sovereignty of the nation was vested in the general body of the *Panth* (Sikh Nation) itself. There was a marked improvement in the minting of this coin and it had on it the year and the name of the mint. It may be considered as the first Sikh rupee in the complete sense of the term. It was called *Gobindshahi*. The inscriptions in Persian on these rupees were the following :

Obverse

Deg-o-Teh-o-Fateh-o-Nusrat-Be-dirang

Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.

(The Kettle and the Sword, Victory and ready Patronage have been obtained from Guru Nanak-Guru Gobind Singh).

Reverse

Zarb darul Saltanat - Lahore

Sambat 1822 maimant - Jalus Mamus

(Struck in Lahore, the seat of Government in the auspicious year *Sambat* 1822).

This *Gobindshahi* rupee was of almost pure silver, each weighing 177 grains. Then there was an interruption in the minting of the Sikh coinage for about one year (*Samvat* 1823-24) which was caused by the last invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali into the Punjab.

The years after the departure of Ahmad Shah Abdali were times when the Sikh *misals* (military confederacies) had consolidated their power. The whole area of Punjab was occupied by them and it was divided into twelve *misals*. The natural divisions of the region were better known as the Trans - Sutlej (*Majha*) and Cis - Sutlej (*Malwa*) states. A number of coins were minted by the *Misal Sardars*. Amritsar was the chief mint city of the Sikhs. The city was jointly ruled by the *Misal Sardars*. The type of coins of the *misals* bore inscriptions borrowed from the seal of Banda Singh Bahadur.

Among the Cis - Sutlej Sikhs the coins in currency were after the patterns of those issued by the *Khalsa* in A.D. 1765. There

were four important mints in Cis - Sutlej region - Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Kaithal. The Cis - Sutlej Sikh coins bore some conspicuous marks which characterised a particular chief or his reign. Secondly, the Cis - Sutlej Sikh States remained more or less under the subjugation or protection of either the Mughals or Afghans or the British respectively. Therefore, the Malwa Sikh coins are not of much significance due to their lack of keeping adherence to the *Khalsa* tradition introduced by Banda Singh Bahadur. Inscriptions on rupees were generally in Persian language. But copper coins have inscriptions in both Gurmukhi and Persian scripts.

The coins of the Majha region are documentary evidence of the religious beliefs as well as the democratic tradition of the *Khalsa Panth* and its Republican character (*Misal System*). The core idea of the legends inscribed on these coins strengthened the temporal meaning of the Sikh Doctrine of Divine Sovereignty. The inscriptions in Persian language and Gurmukhi script show the secular attitude of the Sikh rulers towards their subjects and promoted peaceful co-existence of different religious communities during the Sikh rule. This humanitarian attitude was also the injunction of Guru Gobind Singh to his *Khalsa* - to treat all humanity as One (*manas ki jat sabhe eko pahchanbo* - 'Akal Ustat'-*Dasam Granth*).

The democratic tradition of the *Khalsa* coinage, a legacy of Banda Singh Bahadur became so deep rooted among the Sikhs that it could not be disregarded even by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who conquered all the *Misals* and was no less a powerful autocrat than any of his time. Maharaja Ranjit Singh conquered Lahore in 1799, made it his capital and established the most powerful Sikh Kingdom. He struck his first silver coin on this occasion which were mostly distributed in charity. Afterwards, silver coins were regularly issued by the Lahore Kingdom. The state issues of Maharaja Ranjit Singh did not bear the name of the Maharaja or any other indication of the change of sovereignty. The Maharaja followed the old Sikh pattern and followed the sacred legends and inscriptions attributing benediction of the *Gurus* which appeared in the first Sikh coin issued by Banda Singh Bahadur in 1710 and was

followed by the *Dal Khalsa* and the *Misal Sardars* subsequently with commitment and equal zeal. However, Maharaja Ranjit Singh introduced some modifications and additions in the style of the legends, designs and signs and symbols of the Sikh coins.

The Maharaja named his coins as *Nanakshahis* conveying the sense of belonging to Guru Nanak but retained all other traits and ethos of the Sikh coinage. The coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh carry the names of the *Gurus* and reflects his firm faith and immense commitment to the traditions of the *Khalsa* Commonwealth. He never wore a crown or sat on a throne. His government was called *Sarkar-i-Khalsa* and his seal too carried this impression. The complete and correct reading of the legend on the silver coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh can be read from his coins struck in A.D. 1800, thus :

Obverse

Shah Nanak Wahab ast
Fateh-i-Gobind Singh Sahib Shah Shahan
Fazal-i-Sacha Sahib ast
Sikka Zad bar seem-o-Zar.

(Lord Nanak is the granter of all boons, Victory is of Guru Gobind Singh, The King of Kings. By the Grace of the true Lord is the coin struck in silver and gold).

On the reverse is embossed the year and place of minting of the coin.

Reverse

Zarab darul Saltanat Lahore
Sambat 1857 Maimant Jalus Manus.

(Struck in the seat of the Government, Lahore, in the auspicious *Sambat* 1857).

Silver rupee was the standard coin of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The *Nanakshahi* silver rupee of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was widely used in circulation and trade as it contained good weight and excellent silver as compared to the silver rupee of the other contemporary Indian States. All the silver coins of the Maharaja were almost of the same pattern with a variety of symbols, signs

and decorative devices. Legends and illustrations on the silver coins were in Persian letters. The average silver rupee is weighed about 115 grains.

The coins were regularly struck every year at Lahore, Amritsar, Peshawar, Multan, Srinagar and Dera Ghazi Khan. A variety of coins were struck in Silver (Rupee), Gold (*Mohar*) and copper (*Sicca falus*) at these mints. Amritsar was the biggest minting centre during the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The gold coins bear neither date nor the name of the mint. Their average weight was about 169 grains. It had on the obverse the usual Sikh inscriptions in Gurmukhi characters mentioning the names of the Sikh *Gurus*. On the reverse is found the repeated expression of the legend *Wahe Guru Ji, Wahe Guru Ji, Wahe Guru Ji*. It seems the gold coin was not meant for circulation or commercial use. They were granted or awarded as rewards or honours.

The copper coins (*sicca falus*) were the popular means of transaction in the local markets. The copper coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh are remarkable for their heavy weight and bold execution. They bear symbols, and legends, and name of the mint and in many instances even dates, similar to those on the silver coins. The Amritsar mint produced the largest number of copper coins. There is no strict regularity in the weight of the copper coin. Usually copper coins weighing between 130 to 570 grains are available in various collections. The most significant thing about the copper coins of Maharaja Ranjit is that they bear a large variety of legends, signs and symbols and are not in regular shape. Mostly the copper coin carry the legend of *Akal Sahai Guru Nanak Ji* in part or full. The *peepal* (*Ficus Religiosa*) leaf symbol is invariably found on all copper coins of the Sikhs.

The usage of symbols as an essential feature of the Sikh coins was introduced during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The tradition was carried on by his successors also. The coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh bear a number of symbols on the reverse side of his coins. These symbols have been used in diverse sizes both in silver and copper coins with ornamental decorative designs. They stand testimony to the aesthetic sense of the rulers and the

artistic skill of the artisans employed in minting the coins. On the whole two dozen types of symbols, singly or in combination were engraved to showcase the legends and inscriptions on the coinage of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Symbols of the *peepal* leaf have been wrongly interpreted as complimentary to Moran (the Muslim courtesan of Maharaja Ranjit Singh) other symbols were *Katar* (small sword), *Sri* (spear), *Kharag/Talwar* (sword), *Nisan/Dhawaja* (flag), *Chhatar* (canopy), *Trisul* (trident), *Gada* (staff), *Gurj* (club), *Matsya* (fish), *Shankh* (conchshell), *Kamal* (lotus flower), cross-swords and sometimes replica of ornaments etc. However, the *peepal* leaf symbol of the eternal tree of life remains predominant. The symbols of Maharaja Ranjit Singh are religious, mythical and temporal in character and in certain cases aesthetic also. Some coins bear the names of Hindu deities also. These symbols were adopted for their cultural and religious antiquity.

The *Khalsa* coins furnish us with a definite information on the socio-cultural history of Punjab. The Sikh coins do not carry the names or the effigies of the rulers. The most striking feature of the coins of the *Khalsa* is that they show a close association with religion. These coins were struck in the sacred names of the Sikh *Gurus* and they carry legends attributed to the benediction of their *Gurus* with a variety of signs and symbols selected from the Sikh sacred scriptures and the Indian cultural traditions. The legends, devices, and symbolism of these coins are religious in character. However, majority of the symbols selected for the state issues of the Sikh rulers were adopted for their classical Indian heritage. Therefore, symbolism on the coinage of the *Khalsa* represents the true concern of the Sikh rulers for the temporal as well as spiritual values.

We know that the Sikhs had a compact religious set of symbolism in the form of Five *Kakkars* as elements of faith prescribed by Guru Gobind on Baisakhi day of 1699 at Anandpur Sahib while inducting *Amrit* (initiation ceremony) of the *Khande de pahul* (Nectar stirred with double edged sword). Basically 'ੴ' (symbol of Sikh doctrine of Monotheism) and *Khanda* (double edged sword) are the major symbols of the *Khalsa*. Keeping in view

the evolution of symbolism on the Sikh coinage, we do think that judgement of value can necessarily be made between the preservation of the religious symbols of the Sikhs and progress of the secular attitude of the Sikh rulers in introducing symbols from secular life or universal signs from other Indian religious traditions. It may be pointed out here, that this phenomenon is only a pointer to the progress in the social evolution of the symbolism of the Sikh coinage and does not indicate to introduction of any change in the tradition of the *Khalsa* legends, attributed to the *Gurus* and the inscriptions depicting religious ethos and logos from Sikh scriptures. The axis of this observation is not to be used in an essentially ethical sense but as an extension of the horizon of the cultural perspective of the Sikh numismatics.³ This inference is a deduction from the very injunctions of Guru Gobind Singh given in his *bani*.

The structural form of the state issues of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors had an impact on the subsequent coinage of the Punjab region. The style, pattern and symbolism of these Sikh coins were followed by the Dogras of Jammu (Ministers in the Council of Maharaja Ranjit Singh) when they established their independent kingdom with the support of the British after the decline of the Sikh Kingdom of Lahore.

The Sikh coins can be considered as a rare and unique visual source of the socio-cultural history of the Punjab as well as of the dynamics of the religious attitude and belief system of the eighteenth and nineteenth century Punjab society. The legends attributed to the benediction of the Sikh *Gurus* show how conscious the *Misal Sardars* and Maharaja Ranjit Singh were in preserving of the old Sikh coinage tradition introduced by Banda Singh Bahadur. On the other hand the Maharaja was not averse to borrowing features of the ancient Indian traditions if it suited his purpose. Therefore, the coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh as well as his predecessor *Misal Sardars* bear testimony to the secular attitude of the ruler as well as the cultural growth of diversity in the contemporary Punjab society. The usage of the Persian Language for the inscriptions and legends on the coinage of the *Khalsa* is their

most striking feature. Persian was the language of the Muslims. The selection of Persian language (besides of usage of Gurmukhi letters)¹ bears testimony to the liberal attitude and the spirit of secularism of the Sikh rulers and the Sikh state. Although consideration of the acceptability of the Sikh coins in trade and business transaction by using the device of bi-lingual inscriptions cannot be denied, yet the coins also portray the atmosphere of religious tolerance, presence of communal harmony and peaceful co-existence of multi-cultural and different communities in the Punjab during the Sikh rule. Inspite of the existence of many limitations of various issues of multi-culturalism, the Sikh rulers had generated a legitimate form of policy for registering protection, equality and sense of fraternity to the minority groups (both Hindus and Muslims). The *Khalsa* was the first community in the Indian sub-continent to adopt a secular nature of government and a national multi-cultural statehood. This is the most worthy humanitarian compliment to the *Khalsa* by an objective and unbiased student of the history of human civilisation and the credit goes to Guru Gobind Singh, the creator of this unique organisation.

SIKH COINS, 1765 ONWARDS

LAHORE COIN 1822 SAMBAT



OBVERSE: DEG TEG FATEH NUSRAT O BAIDARANG YAFT UZ
NANAK GURU GOBIND SINGH

REVERSE: ZARB DAR-UL-SALTANT LAHORE MAIMINAT MANUS JALUS.

AMRITSAR COIN 1832 SAMBAT



OVERSE: ZIKKA ZAD BAR HAR DO ALAM TEGH-NANAK WAHIB AST
FATEH SAHI GOBIND SINGH SHAH SHAHAN
FAZAL SACHCHA SAHIB AST

REVERSE: ZARB SRI AMRITSAR JEO SAMBAT 1832 MAIMINAT
MANUS JALUS TAKHT AKAL BAKHT

The Khālsā Rāj Coinage Era

*Bābā Bandā Singh Bahādur
Nānakshāhī 241-244 (1710-13 CE)*

OVERSE

*Shikha tad barhar do alam
Tegh Sahi Gobind Singh Shah Shahan
Fateh Sahi Gobind Singh Shah Shahan
Fazal Sachcha Sahib Ast*

REVERSE

*Zarb Sri Amritsar JEO Sambat 1832
Manus Jalus Takht Akal Bakht*

OVERSE

Coin struck in both the worlds by the guarantee
of Gurti Nānak's sword - By the grace of the True
Sovereign, victory to Gurti Gobind Singh,
the king of kings.

REVERSE

Minted in the age of Peace by the blessed fortune
of the Khālsā - Sanctioned by the glorious
Throne in the City, Year 2.
(Calendar commences upon
conquering Sarkhad in 1710 CE).



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Notes and References:

1. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of The Sikhs*, Vol. I, (1469-1765), Pub. Punjabi University, Patiala, 1989, p. 82.
2. Some of the Muslim historians like Mohammad Latif have asserted that Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had issued a coin bearing an inscription in his own name, but this is not correct. The actual reason of the minting of such a coin is given by Ganesh Das Badehra in his *Chahar Bagh-i-Punjab* that certain fanatic *Kazis* and *Mullahs* forged a few coins bearing inscription :

Sikka Zad dar jahan b fazal-i-Akal

Mulk-i-Ahmad grift Jassa Kalal

[By the Grace of the Akal (God), the coin is struck in the world, Jassa Kalal having captured the country of Ahmad.]

Sardar Jassa Singh was a devout Sikh. Therefore, it is improbable that he should have issued such a coin in his own name, and that too with a clipped name (Singh). Jassa Singh was a baptised Sikh. Ganesh Das a nineteenth century Punjab historian gives us the reason of minting such coins by certain Muslim fanatics with the motive of provoking Ahmad Shah to attack the Sikhs again. None of these coins are available and were broken up at once by the Shah. See *Chahar Gulshan-i-Punjab* (Persian MS, 1912 B. K. (A. D.1855), p. 178. Also Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, 1469-1765, Pub. Punjabi University, Patiala, 1989, p. 157.

3. Guru Gobind Singh had made concrete efforts to inculcate a spirit of unity among the Indian masses. The Guru had warned against the communal, caste and class conflict and had propagated a religion as True Religion and stressed on the unity of religion and interfaith understanding. See 'Akal Ustat' - *Dasam Granth Sahib*, Vol. I, Punjabi University Patiala, 1973. pp., 28, 29, 48, 50, 52.

APPENDIX I

HUKAMNAMA OF SRI GURU GOBIND SINGH JI

Dated *Samvat* 1758, Chet 2, (A.D. 1701), Lines 7.

Text

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਜੀ

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਜੀਓ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ.....

ਨਮੀਨਾ ਇਸ ਪੁਲਾਕੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਰਖੇਗਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਜਪਣਾ
ਨਾਮੁ ਸਵਰੈਗਾ ਸੰਗਤ ਮੇਰਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹੈ ਮਸੰਦਾ ਨੋ ਨਾ
ਹੀ ਮੰਨਣਾ ਜੋ ਕਿਛੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੇ ਨਵਿਤ ਕਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਆਪਣੈ
ਨਾਲਿ ਲੈ ਆਵਣ ਜੋ ਵਿਸਖਿ ਨੂੰ ਦਰਸਨ ਆਵਗੁ ਸੋਨਿ

.....

ਬਹੁੜੀ ਕਰੇਗਾ

ਸੰਮਤ ੧੭੫੮

ਮਿਤੀ ਚੇਤ

ਸਤਰ ੭

This *Hukamnama* (epistle/letter/command) was issued after the creation of the Khalsa (Baisakhi 1699 A.D.). In this *Hukamnama*, Guru Gobind Singh denounced the *Masand* system and announced direct relationship with the Sikh *sangats* (congregations) spread in various areas. The Guru commands his followers not to follow the *Masands* (the representatives of the Sikh Gurus appointed in different areas for preaching Sikhism and collection of offerings from the *sangats*). With the passage of time this system became deteriorated and *Masands*, became corrupt. They assumed independence, and had set up their own centers forgetting all about their duties and commitments. They usurped the collection and preached anti-Sikh practices. Therefore, they were no longer representing the authority of the Guru and doing their task. With

the creation of the Khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh also abolished the *Masand* system and established direct relationship with the Sikh *sangats* spread in various parts of India. It is evidently clear from the text of the *Hukamnamas* where Guru Gobind Singh addresses his followers as *Sangat meri Khalsa hai*. The Guru assures full protection to his followers by pronouncing *Guru rakhega* and instruct them to pursue the spiritual pursuit – *Guru Guru Japna, Janam Sawrega* etc. There are four *Hukamnamas* (published) in which the *Masand* system has been condemned directly or indirectly, (See Ganda Singh, ed. *Hukamname*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967), *Hukamnamas* Nos. 46, 48, 49 and 50. Out of these, two *Hukamnamas* bear direct testimony for rejecting *Masands*. *Hukamnama* No. 46 (issued in 1699 A.D.) and *Hukamnama* No. 50 (issued in 1700 A.D.) mention the term *Masand*. *Hukamnama* No. 48 and *Hukamnama* No. 49 only directs the *sangat*-not to give any offering to any body else (*hor kise nu nahi dena*).

It is for the first time that the above mentioned *Hukamnama* of Guru Gobind Singh, dated 1701 A.D. denouncing *Masand* system has been brought to the notice of the public since it was preserved in private collection of the descendants of Bhai Daya Singh, the first of the *Panj Piyaras* baptised by Guru Gobind Singh. (Now this *Hukamnama* is preserved in the collection of Dr. Madan Jit Kaur, Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh).

APPENDIX II

GURU GOBIND SINGH'S RELICS

GANGA SAGAR

Nawab Rai Kala had given shelter to Guru Gobind Singh in 1705 A.D. at Rai Kala (Ludhiana). Pleased with the hospitality of Rai Kala, Guru Gobind Singh had presented a 'Ganga Sagar' a (unique Jar/Jug) to Nawab Rai Kala as a token of love. The family of Rai Kala has preserved this gift safely for the last three centuries. This relic of Guru Gobind Singh is a symbol of great historical significance of the communal harmony of the pluralistic Indian Society. The descendant of Nawab Rai Kala migrated to Pakistan after the Partition of India in 1947. At present Rai Aziz Ulah Khan, the ninth direct descendant of Nawab Rai Kala is the custodian of the Ganga Sagar. He is a member of the National Assembly, Pakistan. Rai Kala has ensured this priceless relic of historical antiquity in London with full security. Recently, the Ganga Sagar was brought to Damdama Sahib, India for exhibition and *darshan* to the devotees at the request of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, the Central body of the Sikhs on the occasion of the Tercentenary Celebration of the completion and compilation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib by Guru Gobind Singh at Talwandi Sabo. The Ganga Sagar was exhibited from August 28-30, 2006 in the Exhibition of the relics and weapons of Guru Gobind Singh. This Ganga Sagar was brought to India earlier also by Rai Aziz Ulah Khan on the occasion of the Tercentenary celebration of the creation of the Khalsa in 1999 at Sri Anandpur Sahib and the Tercentenary Celebration of the Martyrdom of Sahibzadas (Sons) of Guru Gobind Singh in 2004 at the demand of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee at Fatehgarh Sahib.

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